THE PALMYRENES OF DURA-EUROPOS

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THE PALMYRENES OF DURA-EUROPOS

A Study of Religious Interaction in Roman Syria

BY

LUCINDA DIRVEN

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To my partents

μετὰ πάσης εὐχαριστίας

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This book is dedicated to my parents, who have been a constant source of comfort and support during an education which almost took a lifetime.

ABBREVIATIONS

AA = *Archäologische Anzeiger*
AA(A)S = *Annales Archéologique (Arabes) Syriennes*
ABD = *Anchor Bible Dictionary*
AfO = *Archiv für Orientforschung*
AHS II = *Archéologie et histoire de la Syrie* II: *La Syrie de l'époque achéménide à l'avénement de l'islam* (ed. J.-M. Dentzer and W. Orthmann; Saarbrücke 1989)
AION = *Annali dell'Instituto orientale di Napoli*
AJA = *American Journal of Archaeology*
AKM = *Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*
ANET = J. B. Pritchard (ed.) *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*
AnOr = Analecta Orientalia
ANRW = *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*
AO = Der alte Orient
AOAT = *Alter Orient und Altes Testament*
AP = *L'Arabie préislamique et son environnement historique et culturel. Actes du colloque de Strasbourg 24-27 juin 1987* (ed. T. Fahd = Université des sciences humaines de Strasbourg. Travaux du centre de recherche sur le Proche-Orient et la Grèce antique 10; Leiden 1989)
AW = *Antike Welt*
BA = *Biblical Archaeologist*
BaBesch = *Bulletin Antieke Beschaving*
BagM = *Baghdader Mitteilungen*
BAH = Bibliothèque archéologique et historique
BASOR = *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
BCH = *Bulletin de correspondence hellénique*
BCTH = *Bulletin Archéologique du Comité des Travaux Historiques*
BEO = *Bulletin d'études orientales*
BiOr = *Bibliotheca Orientalis*
BM = Tablets in the collections of the British Museum
BMC = *British Museum Coins*
BSOAS = *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*
CIL = *Corpus inscriptionum Latinarum*
CIMRM I-II = M. J. Vermaseren, *Corpus Inscriptionum et Monumentorum Religionis Mithriacae*, 2 vols. (The Hague 1960)
CIS = *Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum*
CM = Cuneiform Monographs
CRAI = *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres*
DaM = *Damaszener Mitteilungen*
DB = *Dictionnaire de la Bible*
DBSup = *Dictionnaire de la Bible, Supplément*
DDD = *Dictionary of Deities and Demons* (ed. K. van der Toorn, B. Becking and P. W. van der Horst; Leiden 1995)
DF = Damaszener Forschungen
DNWSI = J. Hoftijzer and K. Jongeling, *Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions*, 2 vols. (Leiden 1995)
Eos = *Eos: Commentarii Societatis Philologae Polonorum*
EPRO = Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'empire romain.

FAOS = Freiburger Altorientalische Studien
FP I-V = K. Michalowski, *Palmyre. Fouilles polonaises 1959-1964,* 5 vols. (Warsaw 1960-1966)
GRBS = Greek Roman and Byzantine Studies
HdO = Handbuch der Orientalistik
HTR = Harvard Theological Review
IDR III = *Inscriptiones Daciae Romanae,* vol. 3
IGLS = Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie
IGUR I = L. Moretti, *Inscriptiones Grecae Urbis Romae,* vol. 1 (Rome 1968)
Inv. I-IX = J. Cantineau, *Inventaire des inscriptions de Palmyre,* vols. I-IX (Damascus 1930-1936)
Inv. X = J. Starcky, *Inventaire des inscriptions de Palmyre,* vol. X (Damascus 1949)
Inv. XI = J. Teixidor, *Inventaire des inscriptions de Palmyre,* vol. XI (Beirut 1964)
Inv. XII = A. Bounni and J. Teixidor, *Inventaire des inscriptions de Palmyre,* vol. XII (Damascus 1975)
InvD = R. du Mesnil du Buisson, *Inventaire des inscriptions palmyréniennes de Doura-Europos (32 avant J.-C. à 256 après J.-C.)* (Paris 1939)
IP = J. Cantineau, *Inscriptions palmyréniennes* (Chalôn-sur-Saône 1930)
JbAC = Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum.
JHS = Journal of Hellenic Studies
JNES = Journal of Near Eastern Studies
JSAI = Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam
JSS = Journal of Semitic Studies
KAI = H. Donner and W. Röllig, *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften*
KP = Der Kleine Pauly
Liddell and Scott = *Greek English Lexicon* (compiled by H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, revised and augmented by R. McKenzie; Oxford 1968)
LIMC = Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae
M.A.R.I. = Mari annales de recherches interdisciplinaires
MDOG = Mitteilungen des Deutschen Orient Gesellschaft
MIO = Mitteilungen des Instituts für Orientforschung
MVAG = Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatisch-Aegyptischen Gesellschaft
MUSJ = Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph
NABU = Nouvelles assyriologiques brèves et utilitaires
NS = Numismatic Studies
OGIS = W. Dittenberger (ed.), *Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae*
OLP = Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica
PAT = D. R. Hillers and E. Cussini, *Palmyrene Aramaic Texts* (Baltimore and London 1996)
PBA = Proceedings of the British Academy
PG = J. Migne (ed.), *Patrologia Graeca*
PMAPA = Philological Monographs of the American Philological Association
PNO = D. Schlumberger, *La Palmyrène du Nord-Ouest* (Paris 1951)
PSAS = Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies
PSBA = Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology
PW = Pauly-Wissowa, *Realencyclopädie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft*
PWSup = Supplement to Pauly-Wissowa
RA = Revue d'Assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale
RAA = Revue des Arts Asiatiques
RArch = Revue Archéologique
RLA = Reallexikon der Assyriologie
RB =Revue Biblique
RBK = Reallexikon zur byzantinischen Kunst
REA = Revue des études anciennes
RES =Répertoire d' épigraphie sémitique
RHR = Revue de l'histoire des religions
RGRW = Religions in the Graeco-Roman World

RM = *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts. Römische Abteilung*
RP = *Revue de Philologie*
RSP = M. Gawlikowski, *Recueil d'inscriptions palmyréniennes, provenant de fouilles syriennes et polonaises récentes à Palmyre* (Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres 16; Paris 1974)
RTP = H. Ingholt, H. Seyrig and J. Starcky, *Recueil des tessères de Palmyre* (Paris 1955)
SAA = State Archives of Assyria
SAAB = *State Archives of Assyria Bulletin*
SANE = Sources from the Ancient Near East
SB I-II = P. Collart and J. Vicari, *Le sanctuaire de Baalshamîn à Palmyre,* vols. 1-2: *Topographie et architecture* (Bibliotheca Helvetica Romana; Neuchâtel 1969)
SB III = C. Dunant, *Le sanctuaire de Baalshamin à Palmyre,* vol. 3: *Les inscriptions* (Bibliotheca Helvetica Romana; Rome 1971)
SBGP = Stuttgarter Beiträge zur Geschichte und Politik
SBLTT = The Society of Biblical Literature. Text and Translations
SEL = *Studi Epigrafici e Linguistici*
SH = Studia Hellenistica
SMS = *Syro-Mesopotamian Studies*
SP = *Sculptures of Palmyra* (Mémoirs of the Ancient Orient Museum vol. 1; ed. K. Tanabe; Tokyo 1986)
SVT = *Supplements* to *Vetus Testamentum*
Syria = *Syria. Revue d'art orientale et d'archéologie*
Syriac Dictionary = *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary. Founded upon the Thesaurus Syriacus of R. Payne Smith, DD* (ed. J. Payne Smith; 8th edition, Oxford 1990)
TAM = *Tituli Asiae Minoris*
TCL = Textes cunéiformes du Louvre
TCS = Texts from Cuneiform Sources
TEAD I-IX = *The Excavations at Dura-Europos. Conducted by Yale University and the French Academy of Inscriptions and Letters* (New Haven). Preliminary Reports I-IX
Vols. I-II; ed. P. V. C. Bauer and M. Rostovtzeff, 1929 and 1931
Vols. III-IV; ed. P. V. C. Bauer, M. Rostovtzeff and A. R. Bellinger, 1932 and 1933
Vol. V; ed. M. Rostovtzeff, 1934
Vol. VI; ed. M. Rostovtzeff, A. R. Bellinger, C. Hopkins and C. B. Welles, 1936
Vol. VII-VIII; ed. M. Rostovtzeff, F. E. Brown and C. B. Welles, 1939
Vol. IX. 1: *The Agora and Bazaar*; ed. M. Rostovtzeff, A. R. Bellinger, F. E. Brown and C. B. Welles, 1944
Vol. IX. 2: *The Necropolis*; ed N. P. Toll, M. Rostovtzeff, A. R. Bellinger, F. E. Brown and C. B. Welles, 1946
Vol. IX. 3: *The Palace of the* Dux Ripae *and the Dolicheneum*, ed. M. Rostovtzeff, A. R. Bellinger, F. E. Brown and C. B. Welles, 1952.
TEAD Coins = A. R. Bellinger, *The Excavations at Dura-Europos*. Final Report VI: *The Coins* (New Haven 1949)
TEAD Christian Building = C. H. Kraeling, *The Excavations at Dura-Europos.* Final Report VIII. 2: *The Christian Building* (New York 1967)
TEAD Glass = C. W. Clairmont, *The Excavations at Dura-Europos.* Final Reports IV. 5: *The Glass Vessels* (New Haven 1963)
TEAD Heracles = S. B. Downey, *The Excavations at Dura-Europos.* Final Report III. 1.1: *The Heracles Sculpture* (New Haven 1969)
TEAD PP = C. B. Welles, R. Fink and J. Gilliam (eds.), *The Excavations at Dura-Europos.* Final Report V. 1: *The Parchments and Papyri* (New Haven 1959)
TEAD Stone and Plaster = S. B. Downey, *The Excavations at Dura-Europos*. Conducted by Yale University and the French Academy of Inscriptions and Letters. Final Report III. I.2: *The Stone and Plaster Sculpture* (Monumenta Archaeologica V; Los Angeles 1977)
TEAD Synagogue = C. H. Kraeling, *The Excavations at Dura-Europos.* Final Report VIII. 1: *The Synagogue* (New Haven 1956)

TMP = R. du Mesnil du Buisson, *Les tessères et les monnaies de Palmyre. Un art, une culture et une philosophie grecs dans les moules d'une cité et d'une religion sémitiques* (Paris 1962)
UF = *Ugarit-Forschungen*
VAB = Vorderasiatische Bibliothek
VAS = Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmäler
VAT = Tablets in the collections of the Staatliche Museen, Berlin
VT = *Vetus Testamentum*
YCS 1955 = R. N. Frye, J. F. Gilliam, H. Ingholt, C. B. Welles, "Inscriptions from Dura-Europos", *Yale Classical Studies* 14 (1955), 123-213
YUAGB = *Yale University Art Gallery Bulletin*
ZAVA = *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archäologie*
ZPE = *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*
ZRGG = *Zeitschrift für Religions und Geistesgeschichte*

INTRODUCTION

THE PALMYRENES OF DURA-EUROPOS
A STUDY OF RELIGIOUS INTERACTION

The object of this study is the religion of the Palmyrene community in Dura-Europos. It touches upon the religious history of two of the best documented and most spectacular archaeological sites in Syria, dating back to the first three centuries of the Common Era. Western scholars have labelled Dura-Europos and Palmyra the Pompeii and the Venice of the desert respectively and such illustrious names do justice to the nature of both sites.[1] Like Pompeii, Dura-Europos is renowned for the large amount of material testifying to daily life, such as small sanctuaries, private houses, wall paintings, graffiti and legal documents. In contrast, Palmyra is primarily known for its monumental remains, magnificent temples, impressive colonnaded streets and inscriptions testifying to the wealth and generosity of its rich inhabitants. These riches are the result of the city's role as a trading centre between the Roman empire in the West and the Parthian empire in the East. As such, Palmyra resembles Venice at the beginning of the Renaissance period in Europe.

Palmyra is located in the Syrian desert, 165 kilometres east of Homs (Emesa) and about 200 kilometres west of Dura-Europos, a Hellenistic foundation situated on the left bank of the Euphrates. Dura's history is closely related to its geographical location in the middle Euphrates region, where it was open to various influences from both East and West. Founded by the Greeks around 300 BCE, the city was subsequently ruled by the Parthians and the Romans. Palmyrenes are attested in Dura-Europos from the beginning of the Common Era until the fall of Dura around the middle of the third century CE. It has frequently been assumed that Palmyra had a profound influence upon the culture and religion in Dura-Europos: the present study aims to re-evaluate this hypothesis by means of an in-depth analysis of the archaeological remains of Palmyrene culture in Dura-

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[1] M. Rostovtzeff, *Dura-Europos and its Art* (Oxford 1938), 2-5. E. Will, *Les Palmyréniens. La Venise des sables (Ier siècle avant-IIIème siècle après J.-C.)* (Paris 1992).

Europos.[2] An enumeration and re-evaluation of the archaeological material testifying to Palmyrene influence can be found in the appendix. On the basis of this material it may be asked whether the religion of Palmyrenes residing in Dura differed from the religion in their city of origin and, if this is indeed the case, to what extent it was so and whether this difference was due to the influence of their new surroundings. Alternatively, we may search for the possible influence of this group upon the religion of other inhabitants of the city.

By examining the religious interaction between distinct groups on a local level, this study aims to contribute to a better understanding of the process of religious development and change in the Roman period, a process which has frequently been labelled syncretism. A study of the interaction between Palmyra and Dura-Europos enhances our understanding of the cultural and religious patterns in cities in or near the Syrian-Mesopotamian desert during the first centuries of the Common Era. Starting with Michael Rostovtzeff, scholars emphasized the cultural unity of the cities in this region during the Graeco-Roman period, pointing out the formal resemblances in works of art, religion, and language.[3] However, in recent research there has been a tendency to stress the distinctively local character of culture in these cities.[4] This raises the question of mutual influence and local identity, two topics that will be dealt with extensively in the present study.

Dura-Europos. History of research

Dura-Europos was rediscovered accidentally in 1920.[5] While digging some trenches in a ruined desert fortress called Salihiyah, Captain Murphy of the British army discovered the wall paintings in what was later called the temple of the Palmyrene gods. The British army called upon the orientalist James Henry Breasted to study the murals. Breasted readily grasped their importance and published them in a small volume with the telling title *Oriental Forerunners of Byzantine Painting*, which appeared in 1924.[6] Breasted's report on the Dura murals to the French Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres in 1922 aroused great interest, and it was decided that the excavations should be extended. The Academy commissioned the famous Belgian archaeologist and historian Franz Cumont, who worked at Dura in November 1922 and October and November 1923. After an interval of two years, Yale University, with the collaboration of the French Academy, undertook the systematic exploration of Dura. The work was supervised by the celebrated ancient historian Michael Rostovtzeff. From 1928 to 1937 ten campaigns were conducted, until lack of funds and the Second World War caused the work at Dura to be suspended. At that time about one-quarter of the city had been explored. Since 1986, a joint French-Syrian mission has resumed the exploration of Dura-Europos, working on the preservation of unearthed monuments and attempting to verify and supplement the results of previous excavations.

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[2] F. Cumont, *Fouilles de Doura-Europos 1922-23*, 2 vols. (BAH 9; Paris 1926), 141-145; Rostovtzeff, *Dura-Europos and its Art*, 23; *InvD*, 66-69; C. B. Welles, "The Population of Roman Dura", *Studies in Roman Economic and Social History in Honour of Alan Chester Johnson* (ed. P. R. Coleman-Norton; Princeton 1951), 253.

[3] M. Rostovtzeff, *Caravan Cities. Petra, Jerash, Palmyra, Dura* (Oxford 1932); J. B. Ward-Perkins, "The Roman West and the Parthian East", *PBA* 51 (1965), 189-190; H. J. W. Drijvers, *Cults and Beliefs at Edessa* (EPRO 82; Leiden 1980), 3-7. Recently, H. E. Mathiesen, *Sculpture in the Parthian Empire. A Study in Chronology*, vol. 1 (Aarhus 1992), 13-14, subscribed to the idea of a supposed artistic *koinè* in the region.

[4] L. van Rompay, "Palmyra, Emesa en Edessa: Semitische steden in het gehelleniseerde Nabije Oosten", *Phoenix* 36 (1990), 73-84; F. Millar, *The Roman Near East 31 BC-AD 337* (London 1993); K. S. Freyberger, *Die frühkaiserzeitlichen Heiligtümer der Karawanenstationen im hellenistischen Osten. Zeugnisse eines kulturellen Konflikts im Spannungsfeld zweier politischer Formationen* (DF 6; Mainz am Rhein 1998), 117 and 122-123.

[5] See for an extensive description of its discovery and the history of the excavations between the two world wars: C. Hopkins, *The Discovery of Dura-Europos* (New Haven 1979).

The results of the excavations of Dura-Europos between the two world wars have been described in Cumont's *Fouilles de Doura-Europos 1922-1923*, and in nine preliminary reports dealing with the campaigns over the years from 1928 to 1936.[7] In addition, various final reports have been published on particular buildings and bodies of material: these include a volume on the parchments and papyri, the coins, the stone and plaster sculptures, the synagogue and the Christian building.[8] A final report on many other aspects of Durene culture, such as the large number of graffiti and inscriptions, the paintings, and a great many secular and religious buildings has not been published to date.[9] Here we have to rely on the material published in the preliminary reports, although the descriptions and interpretations of the archaeological material that they propose must be used with caution in the light of new data and new interpretations. The ongoing excavations threaten to invalidate even such influentual textbooks on Dura's history, art and religion as Rostovtzeff's *Dura-Europos and its Art*, which was first published in 1938. More recent works that rely heavily on Rostovtzeff's study are to be used with prudence for the same reasons.[10]

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[6] J. H. Breasted, *Oriental Forerunners of Byzantine Painting. First-Century Wall Paintings from the Fortress of Dura on the Middle Euphrates* (Chicago 1924).

[7] F. Cumont, *Fouilles de Doura-Europos 1922-23*, 2 vols. (BAH 9; Paris 1926); *TEAD* I-IX. On the tenth campaign, the results of which were never extensively published, see S. B. Matheson, "The Tenth Season at Doura-Europos 1936-1937", *Syria* 69 (1992), 121-140.

[8] *TEAD PP*; *TEAD Synagoque; TEAD Christian Building*; *TEAD Heracles*; *TEAD Stone and Plaster.*

[9] C. B. Welles, "The Population of Roman Dura", *Studies in Roman Economic and Social History in Honour of Alan Chester Johnson* (ed. P. R. Coleman-Norton; Princeton 1951), 251-274, is the only extant study which deals with the social history of Dura-Europos on the basis of written sources from the city.

The religious history of Dura-Europos is virtually unwritten. At present a fifteen-page article by Bradford Welles provides the most extensive and complete overview of religion in the city.[11] Information on religion in Dura-Europos is confined to archaeological sources such as architectural remains of sanctuaries, inscriptions, graffiti, religious wall paintings and reliefs. In total, sixteen sanctuaries have been found; from these only the synagogue and the Christian building have been extensively published and analysed in final reports.[12] As for the other fourteen, we are largely dependent upon the descriptions and interpretations of their archaeological remains published in the preliminary reports.[13] Like all materials published in these reports, these descriptions need to be critically reviewed, and - if possible - complemented with the results of recent archaeological explorations.

The first impression one gets when studying the available evidence is of bewildering religious pluriformity. A host of gods and goddesses of various origins were worshipped in Dura-Europos. On the basis of divine names attested in inscriptions and religious representations, we can discern gods of Greek, Babylonian, Aramaic, Phoenician, Arab, Iranian, Jewish and Roman origin. The attestation of deities originating in various cultures prompts the question of their mutual influence and interdependence. It is frequently assumed that these elements from diverse religious traditions had a profound influence upon each other and eventually melted into a new religion: for this reason religion in Dura is frequently typified as syncretistic.[14] The starting point for these studies is Rostovtzeff's characterization of religion in Dura-Europos in *Dura-Europos and its Art.*[15] Rostovtzeff was not a specialist in the history of religion, and his views are based on Franz Cumont's famous survey of Syrian religion in the imperial period - still a starting point for most work done in the field.[16]

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[10] A. Perkins, *The Art of Dura-Europos* (Oxford 1973), leans heavily upon Rostovtzeff's work. For a critical assessment of the present state of research on Dura-Europos: Millar, *Roman Near East*, 445-446.

[11] C. B. Welles, "The Gods of Dura-Europos", *Beiträge zur alten Geschichte und deren Nachleben. Festschrift F. Altheim*, vol. 2 (ed. R. Stiehl and H. E. Stier; Berlin 1969), 50-65.

[12] *TEAD Synagogue*; *TEAD Christian Building*.

[13] Franz Cumont prepared and partly wrote a final report on the Mithraeum which was found at Dura. He never finished this study, which was only published twenty years after his death, in 1975: "The Dura Mithraeum", *Mithraic Studies. Proceedings of the First International Congress of Mithraic Studies*, vol. 1 (ed. J. R. Hinnels; Manchester 1975), 151-214. In addition, Susan Downey discusses Palmyrene religious reliefs in her final report on the stone and plaster sculpture from Dura: *TEAD Stone and Plaster*. The same author assembled and summarized the archaeological data testifying to Palmyrene religious architecture in Dura: *Mesopotamian Religious Architecture. Alexander through the Parthians* (Princeton 1988), 76-130.

[14] *TEAD Synagogue*, 323; O. Eissfeldt, "Dura-Europos", *RAC* IV (1958), 362-367; M. J. Vermaseren, "Hellenistic Religions", *Historia Religionum. Handbook for the History of Religions*, vol. 1: *Religions of the Past* (ed. C. J. Bleeker and G. Widengren; Leiden 1969), 523-

Rostovtzeff discerns two levels in the process of religious syncretism. On the one hand, he assumes that it affected the original character of deities. This holds especially true for gods of Greek origin, who supposedly changed into oriental gods. On the other hand, he uses the term 'syncretism' to describe a process of religious unification and simplification brought about by theological reflection. Rostovtzeff argues that the educated elite of Dura understood that the religious diversity of the city was just outward appearance. They knew that it was in fact one and the same god or goddess who was worshipped under different names in the city. This concept, he argues, was a religious *koinè*, familiar throughout Babylonia, Mesopotamia, Syria and Arabia in the late Hellenistic and imperial period. The greatest creation of this *koinè* was solar henotheism, a component of Syrian religion which is presumed to have exercised a deep influence on Roman religion from the middle of the third century CE onwards.

Religious syncretism versus religious interaction

The characterization of religion in Dura as 'syncretistic' is in need of correction for methodological as well as historical reasons. Although originally a term with positive associations, 'syncretism' acquired pejorative meanings within religious studies, since it was frequently used to denote the 'infiltration' and 'contamination' of supposedly 'pure' religious traditions by symbols and meanings seen as belonging to another.[17] This holds especially true when an entire religion is called 'syncretistic'. Simply identifying a religion as syncretistic gets us practically nowhere, for all religions have composite origins and are continually reconstructed.

524; J. Gutmann, "Dura-Europos", *RBK* I (1966), cols. 1218-1220; Perkins, *Art of Dura-Europos*, 9; M. H. Gates, "Dura-Europos. A Fortress of Syro-Mesopotamian Art", *BA* 47 (1984), 166-181; S. B. Matheson, *Dura-Europos. The Ancient City and the Yale Collection* (YUAG, New Haven 1982).

[15] Rostovtzeff, *Dura-Europos and its Art*, 57-99, esp. 62-69.

[16] F. Cumont, *Les religions orientales dans le paganisme romain* (4th edition, Paris 1929), 95-124.

[17] For the history of the application of the term, see R. Shaw and C. Steward, "Introduction: problematizing Syncretism", *Syncretism/ Anti-syncretism. The Politics of Religious Synthesis* (London-New York 1994), 3-6.

The characterization of a particular religion as syncretistic therefore frequently implies reduction to the lowest common denominator.[18] In studies dealing with the religious life of the Hellenistic and Roman world, syncretism frequently has a double meaning: it implies disorder and confusion, yet it is also integrated into an evolutionary scheme in which it is viewed as an intermediate stage prior to Christian monotheism.[19] Both meanings apply to Rostovtzeff's characterization of religion in Dura-Europos.

Not only is it hazardous to typify the religion of Dura-Europos as syncretistic, it is equally debatable whether religious phenomena which are an amalgamation of elements from different religious traditions may themselves be characterized as such. Again, the term has little explanatory value for the historian of religions, for people do not mix or mingle everything together, but rather assimilate foreign elements into their own tradition and thereby expand them with new meanings.[20] Furthermore, the assimilation of elements from a different culture does not necessarily happen in any logical, progressive way, nor is it irreversible. Thus, instead of speaking of syncretistic phenomena, we ought rather to speak of syncretistic processes, which are determined by social actors.[21] The word 'assimilation' is, in fact, a more appropriate designation for instances of religious interaction that are usually termed as syncretism.

Assimilation, though, only describes one of the possible reactions that may occur when people from different religious traditions meet. Assimilation involves some kind of transformation, some kind of deconstruction and reconstruction which converts foreign elements to people's own culture. It is, however, also possible for people to accept strange ideas and practices without transmitting them with changed meanings. Such instances are best described in terms of acculturation. Acculturation frequently implies that the original culture is being changed, but this is not necessarily the case. People may very well have several independent frames of reference which coexist peacefully, even if they are contradictory. When people from different cultural traditions meet, they tend to assimilate aspects of each other's culture in order to allow for communication. Concomitantly, however, we have to be aware of the possibility that external factors may cause a tendency towards differentiation, an aspect of religious interaction in which people strive to maintain their original identity. Differentiation applies particularly to religious traditions, for religion frequently functions as an important identity marker.[22] Instead of using the term 'syncretism', the historical process of religious interaction is therefore better described in terms of assimilation, acculturation and differentiation.[23] The relationship between these processes is determined by a great many historical and social factors, such as the nature and the extent of contact and the balance of political and economic power.

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[18] L. Leertouwer, "Syncretisme. Over de dynamiek van religieuze verschijnselen", *Het kosmisch patroon. Het ene en het vele in de godsdiensten* (ed. T. Chowdhury e.a.; Tilburg 1989), 5-20.

[19] Shaw and Steward, "Problematizing Syncretism", 4.

[20] Drijvers, *Edessa*, 17.

[21] As such, anthropologists and historians of religions have recently pleaded for the term to be reinstated: A. Droogers, "Syncretism. The Problem of Definition, the Definition of the Problem", *Dialogue and Syncretism. An Interdisciplinary Approach* (ed. J. Gort e.a.; Grand Rapids 1989), 7-25; Shaw and Steward, "Problematizing Syncretism", 7; G. Aijmer (ed.), *Syncretism and the Commerce of Symbols* (1995), 12.

Archaeological remains are the only testimony to the religious ideas and practices in Dura-Europos, and these do not allow for Rostovtzeff's reconstruction of the syncretistic character of the deities and their theology. Assimilation may be confined to the mere adoption of religious formulations and images, which are re-interpreted within the context of an existing religious tradition. Artistic or cultural assimilation would, in fact, be a much better designation for these cases of interaction than religious assimilation, although it is often hard to draw the line between artistic and religious assimilation, especially since their relationship is not fixed: what started as a borrowing of forms and images may eventually turn into religious assimilation and vice versa. In the case of Dura-Europos, it is virtually impossible to make this distinction. No mythological, theological, or ritual texts have been preserved, and our information on different gods is confined to outward appearances. To state that the character of deities changed when their outward form altered simply goes beyond the evidence. The material standing at our disposal definitely cannot be used to arrive at a reconstruction of a theology current among the learned population of the city. Rostovtzeff's assumption that the educated unified religious traditions of different origin, is no more than a guess by a modern scholar.

The religion of Dura was not a product of priestly speculation, but resulted from the different cultural and ethnic influences that made themselves felt in the city during the course of its history. Whereas we are ill informed about the contents of the diverse cults attested in the city, Dura-Europos yielded a great quantity of material which informs us about the social and historical setting of various religious groups. In order to study the process of religious interaction, we have to relate the multitude of religious traditions to different ethnic groups. Given the amount of material, and the present state of research, a systematic study dealing with Dura's religious history is impossible within the scope of this monograph. For this reason the present research is confined to a description and analysis of the religious remains of one of the ethnic groups of the city, people from Palmyra.

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[22] K. van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria and Israel. Continuity and Change in the Forms of Religious Life* (Leiden 1996), esp. 6-8.

[23] I find the terminology 'syncretism' and 'anti-syncretism', proposed by Shaw and Steward, "Problematizing Syncretism", 7, confusing, and use the neutral terms 'assimilation' and 'differentiation' instead.

The religion of Palmyrene expatriates in Dura-Europos

The choice of the Palmyrene community was prompted by several motives. As stated above, it has frequently been assumed that Palmyra had a profound influence upon Durene culture and religion.[24] Fortunately, the Palmyrene community in Dura-Europos is most suitable for studying this presumed process of cultural and religious interaction. In contrast to many social groups living in Dura-Europos, Palmyrenes can relatively easily be identified on the basis of the use of the Palmyrene script, the occurrence of typical Palmyrene personal names, and the reference to Palmyrene deities.[25] Palmyrenes lived in Dura-Europos for almost three centuries, from 33 BCE until the fall of the city around the middle of the third century CE, which enables us to trace their religious development in the course of time. We are furthermore comparatively well informed about their social status, for Palmyrenes can be divided into roughly two groups, merchants and soldiers: consequently we can establish the possible influence of social circumstances upon religious preferences. Both Palmyrene merchants and soldiers are attested elsewhere and by comparing this material with the situation in Dura-Europos, we may hope to determine the influence of local circumstances there. Last but not least, we are comparatively well informed about the religious situation in the city of Palmyra, and this provides the context against which our data may be evaluated.

In contrast to the religious history of Dura-Europos, Palmyrene religion has been the subject of considerable scholarly attention over the past century.[26] It is not the aim of this study to offer a systematic and comprehensive description of religion in Palmyra itself. The interest here is mostly in the religion of Palmyrene expatriates, and this has determined both the selection and the interpretation of the Palmyrene material used. In the present study this means that, despite the many facets of religion in Palmyra, civic religion in particular proves to be significant with respect to our understanding of the religion of Palmyrene expatriates. Although the analysis of the religion of Palmyrene expatriates results in a one-sided reconstruction of religion in Palmyra, it is exactly this point of departure which brings this particular aspect of Palmyrene religion to the fore. Thereby the religion of Palmyrene expatriates contributes to our knowledge of religion in Palmyra itself.

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[24] Above, note 2.

[25] For the criteria that have been used to select the Palmyrene material, compare the introduction to the appendix, below, 221-223.

[26] H. J. W. Drijvers, *The Religion of Palmyra* (Iconography of Religions XV, 15; Leiden 1976), 5-7, for an overview of the history of research in this field of study. To the works cited here, must be added M. Gawlikowski, "Les dieux de Palmyre", *ANRW* II 18.4 (1990), 2605-2658, an important article on which what follows draws heavily.

The present study presents an effort to interpret the religious data of the Palmyrene community in Dura-Europos in their historical, sociological, and cultural context. Such an analysis departs from certain assumptions about the concepts of culture and religion, and about the way in which they manifest themselves in society.[27] I use the term 'religion' to designate a set of various human notions, values and practices involving non-empirical powers. As such, I take religion to be an aspect of human culture, that partakes in the way a particular society or group conceptualizes the world, and which, at least in my field of research, can only be studied and understood in as much as it manifests itself in other provinces of human culture and society. To use Clifford Geertz's terms, religion is at once a model *of* and a model *for* reality; it both describes and shapes reality, whether social or otherwise, at one and the same time.[28] Hence the concepts of religion and culture on the one hand, and society on the other, are intrinsically related to each other.

Starting from the assumption that religion is not an isolated phenomenon but a historically determined component of culture and society, a short survey of the history and culture of Palmyra and Dura-Europos precedes the analysis of the religious materials. Analogous to the situation of immigrant communities in modern times, it may be presumed that the social and economic position of the Palmyrene residents of Dura-Europos affected their religious preferences. The concluding part of the first chapter sets out to reconstruct this history on the basis of the archaeological remains from Dura-Europos and the economic relationship between this city and Palmyra. The subsequent five chapters analyse various aspects of

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[27] My approach has been inspired by the work of the anthropologist C. Geertz, in particular by his important article "Religion as a Cultural System", *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York 1973), 87-125. Equally important is the approach taken by Th. P van Baaren, "Science of Religion as a Systematic Discipline. Some Introductory Remarks", *Religion, Culture and Methodology* (ed. Th. P. van Baaren and H. J. W. Drijvers; The Hague 1973), 35-56.

[28] Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System", 123-125.

Palmyrene religion in Dura-Europos on the basis of particular monuments that were found here. In line with my intention to interpret the religion of the Palmyrene community in its historical and sociological context, the monuments which serve as the starting point for these chapters have been chronologically arranged, as far as is possible. In each chapter, the archaeological materials give rise to a discussion of particular deities or constellations of deities which, in turn, leads to analysis of various aspects of the phenomenon of religious interaction.

CHAPTER ONE

THE HISTORY OF DURA-EUROPOS AND PALMYRA

The historical context of Palmyrene residents of Dura-Europos

The study of migrant communities in modern times shows their religion to be influenced not only by the religion in their place of origin and new residence, but also by a great many social and economic factors, such as the duration of and reason for their stay; their economic position, number, age, and profession; the remoteness of their native country and the degree of contact they maintain with it.[1] This prompts us to study the socio-historical context of the Palmyrene community of Dura-Europos. Compared to what is known about contemporary religious groups, however, our information on Palmyrenes in Dura-Europos is extremely scarce. Many of the above-mentioned questions, crucial to a proper understanding of the religion of Palmyrenes residing in Dura, can only be answered in part, or remain unsolved. The majority of sources at our disposal cast an indirect light upon the social and economic position of the Palmyrene community of Dura-Europos and need to be related to what is known about the general history of both cities in order to become meaningful. The present chapter begins with a short outline of the history of Dura-Europos and Palmyra. Subsequently, an attempt will be made to sketch the social and economic position of the Palmyrenes residing in Dura-Europos during the first three centuries CE.

Dura-Europos

Dura-Europos is strategically situated on a plateau overlooking the middle Euphrates (figs. 2 and 4). To the east the city is protected by the river, to the north and south by two wadis. The desert west of the city provided the only possible threat. This side was protected by impressive fortifications, which are the most prominent feature of the ancient city in the present day. The military function of the town was already conspicuous in antiquity. In Aramaic the town was called Dura, meaning 'fortress'. Not surprisingly, this name was especially popular during the last fifty years of its existence, at a time when the city functioned primarily as a Roman military fortress.[2] Its Greek name was Europos, a name which honours the Macedonian birthplace of the first Seleucid king Seleucus Nicator, during whose reign the city was founded. Both names were used separately in antiquity: the contraction Dura-Europos is a modern invention.

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[1] Cf. the various articles in the recent volume *Strangers and Sojourners. Religious Communities in the Diaspora* (ed. G. ter Haar; Leuven 1998).

The history of Dura-Europos was determined by the prominent political and economic role of the Euphrates in the course of events involving East and West. From time immemorial the Euphrates had been used to connect Syria and Mesopotamia, playing a crucial role in the commercial contacts between these two regions and occasionally functioning as a military route.[3] From Dura-Europos the Euphrates could be observed, held under control and made safe for traffic. During the five and a half centuries of its existence, the city was successively ruled by the Greeks, the Parthians and the Romans. Founded by the Greeks around 300 BCE, Europos was conquered by the Parthians in 113 BCE. With a short interruption in 115 CE, when the Romans briefly took hold of it, the city was an outpost of the Parthian Empire for almost three centuries, until 165 CE. In that year the armies of Lucius Verus and Avidius Crassus marched against the Parthians and were able to conquer Dura. It lasted as a Roman city for less than a century, until it was conquered by the Sassanian army during Shapur I's second invasion of Syria in the 250s. The Persians quickly removed the inhabitants from the city. Dura was occupied by the Sasanians for a short time and then abandoned.[4] According to Ammianus Marcellinus it was a deserted town when Julian's army passed it in 363 CE.[5] The city fell into oblivion until it was rediscovered by the British army in 1920.

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[2] C. B. Welles, "The Population of Roman Dura", *Studies in Roman Economic and Social History in Honour of Alan Chester Johnson* (ed. P. R. Coleman-Norton; Princeton 1951), 261.

[3] *Le moyen Euphrate: zone de contacts et d'échanges* (Actes du Colloque de Strasbourg 10-12 mars 1977; ed. J. C. Margueron; Leiden, 1980).

[4] Rostovtzeff, *Dura-Europos and its Ar*, 30. This hypothesis is confirmed by recent finds in the city: P. Leriche and A. Al Mahoud, "Doura-Europos. Bilan des recherches récentes", *CRAI* 1994, 417-419. .

[5] Ammianus Marcellinus XXIII, 5, 7-8. Cf. M. H. Dodgeon and S. N. C. Lieu (eds.), *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars AD 226-363. A Documentary History* (London-New York 1991), 37.

Hellenistic Dura-Europos

Very little is known about Europos during the Hellenistic period. Material dating from the Seleucid era is confined to a few archaeological remains and two or three documents;[6] in addition, there are several references in classical authors and a number of sources from Parthian and Roman Dura which refer to the city's Hellenistic past.[7] Isidorus of Charax, writing in the first century of the Common Era, states that the city was founded by Nicanor - in all probability a general of Seleucus Nicator - and was called Europos by the Greeks.[8] The Macedonian colony was probably a re-foundation of an earlier settlement on the spot. A clay tablet found at Dura, dating from the reign of King Hammurabi of Ḥana (ca. 1900 BCE) refers to a locality by the name of Damara.[9] Damara is still recognizable in the later name Dura and therefore possibly refers to a pre-existing settlement. Dura-Europos is situated only six miles north of ancient Mari, and it is not surprising that habitation at the site reaches back to the second millennium BCE. Apart from this clay tablet, no material was found testifying to a settlement before the Seleucid period. In all probability, therefore, the place had long since been deserted when the Macedonian colony was founded around 300 BCE.

During the first century of its existence Europos was only a small stronghold or military village enjoying limited autonomy and possessing no territory. Recent archaeological investigations have shown that the fortifications and the Hippodamian city plan do not date back to the first days of the Greek colony, as Cumont and Rostovtzeff assumed.[10] In all likelihood habitation was confined to the edge of the plateau near the river, the area presently occupied by the citadel.[11] In addition, it may be inferred from a deed of sale dated 195 BCE that Macedonian settlers - in all probability discharged soldiers - acquired lots (*kleroi*) of fertile land along the banks of the Euphrates.[12] According to the law revealed by this parchment, an estate reverted to the king if there were no heirs within a prescribed degree of kinship: the land surrounding the town must therefore have been royal land in law.[13]

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[6] *TEAD PP*, nos. 15 (195 CE), 34 (116 CE), and perhaps 12 (n.d.). On Hellenistic Europos see A. H. M. Jones, *The Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces* (2nd edition, Oxford 1971), 217-219.

[7] On the references to the city's past in later sources see below, Chapter IV, 119-122.

[8] Isidore of Charax, *Mansiones Parthicae*: *Geographi Graeci Minoris*, vol. 1 (ed. K. Müller; Paris 1882), 248: Δοῦρα Νικάνορος πόλις κτίσμα Μακεδόνων ὑπὸ δὲ Ἑλλήνων Εὐροπὸς καλεῖται. Cf. M. Rostovtzeff, "The Foundation of Dura-Europos on the Euphrates", *Annales de l'institut Kondakov* 10 (1938), 102-106.

[9] F. J. Stephens, "A Cuneiform Tablet from Dura-Europos", *RA* 34 (1937), 183-190. Cf. the recent photograph in S. B. Matheson, "The Tenth Season at Doura-Europos 1936-1937", *Syria* 69 (1992), 133, fig. 12.

[10] Leriche and Al Mahmoud, "Doura-Europos. Bilan des recherches récentes", 397-407. For the former view see: F. Cumont, *Fouilles de Doura-Europos 1922-23,* 2 vols. (BAH 9; Paris 1926), 1-5; M. Rostovtzeff, "Rapport sur les fouilles de Doura-Europos, campagne de fouille 1936-1937", *CRAI* 1937, 197; idem, *Dura-Europos and its Art*, 11; idem, *The Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire* (2nd edition, revised by P. M. Fraser; Oxford 1963), 483.

From a small military outpost, Europos gradually developed into a Macedonian colony. In the second quarter of the second century BCE, with the threat of a Parthian siege, the fortifications and the Hippodamian city plan were created. The fortifications enclosed an area which far surpassed the dimensions of the original settlement. However, by no means all the plots of the ambitious new Hippodamian city plan were built on: habitation was confined to the central area of the town, around the main street which runs east-west through the city, and to the agora. The creation of this political and economic centre suggests that Dura-Europos came to function as the centre of a settled zone along the Euphrates. Descendants of the first Macedonian colonists possessed property in this region, and there were undoubtedly contacts between the Greek settlers and the indigenous population living in the villages along the middle Euphrates.[14] Attracted by the city's growing prosperity, some of these natives settled in the city. However, we have no clue as to the extent and possible effects of the interaction between Greek settlers and the indigenous population during the Hellenistic period.

Parthian Dura-Europos

Very little is known about the first century of Parthian rule, after Europos was conquered by the Parthians in 113 BCE.[15] Archaeological remains, inscriptions and papyri only begin to appear in significant volume at the end of the first century BCE, but it may be inferred from the material dating from the Common Era that Dura-Europos did not change into a 'Parthian' town when ruled by the Parthians.

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[11] On the military importance of the site see Rostovtzeff, "Foundation of Dura-Europos", 104.

[12] *TEAD PP*, 7, and no. 15; Welles, "Population of Roman Dura", 262-263. The names that have been preserved in the two documents dating from the Seleucid period are of Greek, specifically Macedonian, origin.

[13] Jones, *Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces*, 218.

[14] Above, note 12.

[15] C. B. Welles, "The Chronology of Dura Europos", *Eos* 48 (1956), 469.

Instead, the available evidence suggests that the Hellenistic city gradually and partially adjusted to its local environment. In spite of an occasional Iranian name attested during this period, it is clear that no Parthian officials or soldiers resided in Dura-Europos: instead, Parthian rulers made use of the existing Greek institutions and the local ruling class to govern the city.[16] The city's administration was in the hands of a so-called στρατηγὸς καὶ ἐπιστάτης τῆς πόλεως, a royal functionary who paid his respect to the Arsacid king of kings. The office was filled by people of Graeco-Macedonian nomenclature and was probably hereditary.[17]

It is remarkable how well the descendants of Macedonian immigrants managed to retain their leading social position during the Parthian period, making up the personnel of the royal court and acting as witnesses to contracts.[18] Moreover, they are the only people referred to in the sources as *Europaioi*, official citizens of Europos, and are thereby clearly distinguished from non-citizen residents, who are mainly people of Aramaic and Iranian nomenclature.[19] From the beginning of the Common Era a growing number of people of indigenous origin settled in the city. They rendered a variety of economic services and were for the greater part inferior to the Greek ruling class, although some did manage to become members of the local elite. Of the ladies of the leading families who had their names inscribed on the stone seats in one of the rooms of the temple dedicated to Artemis, most have Graeco-Macedonian names, but several of the names are Aramaic.[20] Moreover, it follows from several dedicatory inscriptions that indigenous people were engaged in major building projects.[21] Their contribution to the city's public affairs testifies to the enrichment of a part of the indigenous population brought about by the favourable economic situation in Dura at the turn of the Common Era.

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[16] Welles, "Population of Roman Dura", 253 and 262.

[17] For a list of these officials attested in Dura see: *YCS* 1955, 140-142; P. Arnaud, "Doura-Europos, microcosme grec ou rouage de l' administration arsacide? Modes de maîtrise du territoire et intégration des notables locaux dans la pratique administrative des rois arsacides", *Syria* 63 (1986), 147, note 53. Arnaud argues that this family was thoroughly immersed in Iranian traditions since it played a prominent role in the indigenous cults of Aphlad and Mithras. However, the cult of Aphlad was confined to people from the village of Anath, and is not Iranian. The cult of Mithras is intimately bound up with the Roman soldiers stationed in Dura after 165 CE (cf. the appendix, below, note 255). Consequently there are no reasons to assume that the rulers of Dura were in any way influenced by Iranian culture.

[18] Welles, "Population of Roman Dura", 262-267; *TEAD PP*, 7.

[19] Before 180 CE, we know of no people bearing local Aramaic names who are called *Europaioi*: Welles, "Population of Roman Dura", 270. However, in view of the eminent position of several of these people exemplified by other sources available, this may be a mere coincidence.

[20] Cumont, *Fouilles*, 404-447; *TEAD* III, 18-38, and 51-57. Welles, "Population of Roman Dura", 263.

[21] Rostovtzeff, *Dura-Europos and its Art*, 21; K. Dijkstra, *Life and Loyalty. A Study in the Socio-Religious Culture of Syria and Mesopotamia in the Graeco-Roman Period Based on Epigraphical Evidence* (RGRW 128; Leiden 1995), 275.

The economy of Parthian Dura

The first half of the first century CE is marked by an outburst of building activity. Apart from the reconstruction and extension of existing buildings, vacant areas of the town were built up, notably those in the proximity of the city walls, a sudden spate of construction testifying to the arrival of new people and an increase in prosperity. This, in turn, was the result of a growth in the local economy in the first century of the Common Era, during a period when Dura-Europos was the political, administrative and economic centre of a large agricultural and cattle-breeding territory on the middle Euphrates which extended from the mouth of the Chabur in the north, to Anath or Hit in the south.[22] The army of Cyrus the Younger had already found this region well stocked with wine and grain.[23] Vineyards and orchards, situated in the area north of the Chabur, are frequently mentioned in Durene documents;[24] wheat and barley were cultivated closer by, in the Euphrates valley itself.[25] Inhabitants of Dura possessed land in this area and farmers from its surroundings turned to its wealthy citizens for financial support.[26] In addition, the city served as a centre for nomadic groups who pastured their herds in its territory, a small amount of Safaitic graffiti found in the city testifying to their presence.[27]

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[22] *TEAD* VII-VIII, 437-438; *TEAD PP*, 8-9; Rostovtzeff, *Dura-Europos and its Art*, 22; C. B. Welles and M. Rostovtzeff, *CRAI* 1931, 182; F. Millar, *The Roman Near East 31 BC-AD 337* (London 1993), 447-448.

[23] Xenophon, *Anab.* I: 4, 19

[24] *TEAD PP*, nos. 23 (133 CE), 25 (180 CE), and 26 (227 CE). In the first half of the third century CE the Durene merchant Nebuchelus still purchased wine in Banabel, a village on the bank of the Euphrates north of the Chabur: *TEAD* IV, 122-123, no. 245, and the correction in *TEAD* VII-VIII, 437, note 1. Fruit trees are mentioned in *TEAD PP*, nos. 15 and 16 (both from the Hellenistic period).

[25] Around the middle of the third century CE the merchant Nebuchelus possessed a plot of land by the river, below the plateau, on which grain was cultivated: *TEAD* IV, no. 258. The same person sold his grain to a board of grain commissioners, who had to secure an adequate supply of grain for the city: *op. cit.*, no. 253. We know from the same records that part of the harvest of wheat and barley was exported: *op. cit.*, no. 200. If the transaction involving 470 camel - or donkey-loads from the same house refers to grain, this is evidence of a flourishing grain trade. Unfortunately the interpretation is uncertain.

[26] *TEAD PP*, nos. 25 (180 CE) and 23 (133 CE).

[27] The ruler of Dura is characterized as *arabarchès* in *TEAD PP*, no. 20 (121 CE). *TEAD PP*, no. 13, refers to grazing taxes. In contrast to the situation in contemporary Palmyra, nomads do not seem to have settled down in great numbers.

The products grown in the territory under Dura's jurisdiction were in all likelihood traded in the city, as may be inferred from the construction of a new road heading north-west around the beginning of the first century CE.[28] At the same time, the passage through the main gate of Dura-Europos was made narrower and adapted to the movement of carts. As carts could only be used in local traffic along the Euphrates these alterations point towards a flourishing of the local economy. In addition, the remains of a route heading for the Wadi aş Şwab were found on the plain outside the city, in line with the main gate. This in all likelihood led via Giffa or Oumm aş-Şelabîh through the desert to Palmyra. Palmyrenes are first attested in Dura-Europos shortly before the beginning of the Common Era. In 33 BCE two Palmyrenes dedicated a shrine to the gods Bel and Iarḥibol on the plateau outside the fortified city walls: significantly, this is one of the earliest inscriptions from Dura.[29] Around the middle of the first century CE people from Anath, a village situated about 120 kilometres downstream of Dura-Europos, dedicated an *andron* to their local god Aphlad.[30] In all likelihood the Palmyrenes, like the other newly arrived people, were traders and businessmen, attracted by the favourable economic situation.

The outburst of economic activity around the beginning of the Common Era is undoubtedly related to the *Pax Romana*, which provided merchants with safe travelling conditions and opened up the Western market for Eastern products. During the first century of the Common Era the Roman and the Parthian empires had reached a balance of power in which both sides seemed set for a period of minor wars and the consolidation of the existing frontiers. From about the beginning of the Common Era onwards, the Euphrates south of Zeugma was conceived as the frontier between Rome and Parthia.[31] However, the river did not function primarily to mark off blocks of territory, but rather provided a trade and military route through the infertile steppe. Of old, the route along the Euphrates had been used to connect the cities in northern Syria with the south of Mesopotamia, and the favourable political situation revived this ancient trading route.[32] Dura-Europos lay in the economic orbit of Antioch and from the reign of Claudius we note a large increase of Roman bronze from the provincial mint of Antioch.[33] Roman glass, probably fabricated in Antioch, was also imported to Dura-Europos in the early Imperial period.[34]

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[28] P. Leriche, "La porte de Palmyre à Doura-Europos", *AAAS* 42 (1996), 246. A *terminus ante quem* for the construction of this road is provided by the arch of Trajan, erected around 115-117 CE. The fact that people from Anath and Palmyra settled within the city around the middle of the first century CE perhaps suggests that the 'Euphrates road' was constructed around this time.

[29] Appendix, inscription no. 1.

[30] *TEAD* V, 112-116, nos. 416-418.

[31] Strabo, *Geog*. XVI, I, 28. The role of the river as a frontier was clearly symbolized in 1 CE, when Augustus' adopted son Gaius met the Parthian king Phrataces on an island in the Euphrates. For an outline of the political situation in this period see Millar, *Roman Near East*, 27-43.

In addition, it has frequently been suggested that Dura prospered in the wake of Palmyra, profiting from the Palmyrene caravans which halted in the city on their way to Palmyrene trading centres in southern Babylonia. The route of these caravans is a complicated issue. For the moment it suffices to say that Palmyrenes stationed at Dura were involved in trading activities; whether they were involved in the local trade between both cities, the caravan trade, or both, is a question to which we shall return in the last section of this chapter, in which the economic position of Palmyrene immigrants in Dura-Europos will be discussed in greater detail.

Culture and religion in Parthian Dura

The assessment of the interaction between the Macedonian and the native population, and its influence upon the culture and the religion of the city, is a vexed issue, especially since the various sources do not provide a clear picture. Both the inscriptions and the legal documents show that Greek continued to be the standard language for official purposes: apparently, therefore, the public character of the city continued to be determined by its Macedonian origin. In contrast to Hatra or Palmyra, Dura has not yielded very many Aramaic inscriptions, and a few Safaitic graffiti apart, the only common Semitic language inscriptions or graffiti are Palmyrene. The personal names and the context in which they were found show that the majority were made by Palmyrene residents in the city. The relief dedicated to Zeus Kyrios-Baalshamin is the only monument with Palmyrene characteristics which is not dedicated by Palmyrenes: significantly, this is the only Greek-

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[32] It has frequently been inferred from Strabo's account in *Geog.* XVI, I, 27, that the route taken by traders between northern Syria and Babylonia was blocked by Arab tribes at the beginning of the Common Era. Traditionally, this is considered to be an important incentive for the rise of the Palmyrene caravan trade. However, as noted by Millar, *Roman Near East*, 439-440, Strabo's account is filled with errors. Moreover, it may be inferred from the account of Strabo's contemporary Isidorus of Charax, whose *Parthian Stations* traces the same route in more detail, that this route was not blocked to traffic. At this time caravans were regularly ferried from Nabagath to the other bank of the Euphrates: M. Gawlikowski, "Thapsacus and Zeugma: The Crossing of the Euphrates in Antiquity", *Iraq* 58 (1996), 131, note 67.

[33] *TEAD Coins*, 196-198 and 203.

[34] *TEAD Glass*, 149.

Palmyrene inscription dating from this period.[35] It is not clear whether Greek was the language of daily use as well, although the absence of Semitic graffiti outside a Palmyrene context does suggest that Greek remained a spoken language alongside Aramaic, which was undoubtedly spoken as well. Although the use of double names, in Greek and Aramaic, was less common than might have been expected in a bilingual city, this phenomenon is attested with *Europaioi*, as well as with 'natives'.[36]

Whereas Greek remained the official language of Parthian Dura-Europos, the city did not look like a Greek city during this period. Apart from the city walls and the Hippodamian city plan, the material remains testify to a profound oriental influence. The plans of the temples which were erected from the middle of the first century BCE onwards are of a distinctively local type following, with a few exceptions, the so-called 'Babylonian court plan', with a *pronaos-naos* unit normally oriented perpendicular to the axis of the entrance, and with a number of chapels or subsidiary rooms around the court walls.[37] Figurative monuments from this period closely resemble the monuments found at Palmyra, Hatra and other cities bordering the Syro-Mesopotamian desert, and are part of a group of monuments commonly called Parthian art.

The same local influences can be observed in the religion of the city during this period. Next to deities of Greek origin such as Zeus, Artemis, and Apollo who were introduced by the Macedonian settlers, many Semitic and Arabic deities of various origins were worshipped in the city during this period. Their cult was introduced by the growing number of Semitic-speaking peoples who settled in Dura-Europos during the Parthian period. The origin of some of these deities and their worshippers is plain enough. The cult of Bel, Iarḥibol, Aglibol and Arṣu is of Palmyrene origin, whereas the cult of the god Aphlad came to Dura-Europos from the village of Anath - the goddess Azzanathkona, who was also called Artemis, is possibly related to the same village.[38] To these we may add several Aramaic cults such as those of Atargatis, Adonis, and the West Semitic storm god Baalshamin-Zeus Kyrios, the exact provenance of which are not known. Apart from these cults, which may be characterized as Semitic on the ground of the name of the deity, there are several gods whose identity and nature is obscure. Two tutelary deities of temples are known only by their Greek names: a deity by the name of Zeus Soter, who was worshipped in the temple which is normally called the temple of the Palmyrene gods and Zeus Theos, who was the object of a cult in a temple the excavators called after him.[39]

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[35] Cf. the discussion of the relief and the dedicatory inscription in the appendix, below, inscription no. 5, and 220-221.

[36] Cf. the more extensive discussion of double nomenclature in the appendix, below, note 274.

[37] S. B. Downey, *Mesopotamian Religious Architecture. Alexander through the Parthians* (Princeton 1988), 88-129.

[38] *TEAD* V, 177-178, no. 504 (32-33 CE); *TEAD* V, 142-145, no. 453 (161 CE). The name of this goddess is unexplained and not attested elsewhere. Cf. *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 185-186, for the various explanations hitherto proposed. The first element, *ʾzz*, is the Semitic root meaning 'power', whereas Anath is the name of an ancient Babylonian goddess, as well as the name of a neighbouring village on the Euphrates. In view of the presence of people from Anath in Dura, it is possible that the goddess is somehow related to this village.

In view of the material remains of Parthian Dura-Europos, Rostovtzeff states that from the middle of the first century BCE Greek Europos was transformed into oriental Dura. He notes that this development was not due to any pressure or orientalizing policy on the part of the Parthian government; instead, the city was orientalized by its own citizens, a development which corresponds to a profound change in their mentality and religion.[40] Despite the fact that several deities were called by a Greek name, Rostovtzeff assumes that they were actually oriental gods.[41] In addition, E. Will suggests that the orientalization of religion in Dura was influenced by Palmyrene residents there.[42] However, the assumption that deities of Greek origin changed into oriental gods rests primarily on the architecture of their temples and the iconography of their cult images, and it is dubious whether it may be inferred from the oriental forms of the temples and the figurative monuments that Greek gods had actually changed into oriental deities. The fact that visitors to the different temples ordered the reliefs in the same workshop and had the paintings made by the same artists, testifies to artistic interaction but it does not necessarily follow that we are dealing with religious interaction. A number of reliefs dating from about the middle of the first century CE were produced in a workshop in Dura-Europos which was at least partly run by sculptors of

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[39] For a discussion of the temple of the Palmyrene gods see the appendix, below, 299-301. On the temple of Zeus Theos see *TEAD* VII-VIII, 180-217. Zeus Theos is mentioned in inscription no. 888, *op. cit.*, 214-215.

[40] Rostovtzeff, *Dura-Europos and its Art*, 39-41. Rostovtzeff's reconstruction is followed by A. Perkins, *The Art of Dura-Europos* (Oxford 1973), 16-17; Downey, *Mesopotamian Religious Architecture*, 128-129 and 180.

[41] Rostovtzeff, *Dura-Europos and its Art*, 59 and 61: "Greek religion ... in Parthian and Roman Dura was a mere survival, no longer a living religion with worshippers devoted to it. There was ... no temple dedicated to Greek gods, I mean no temple Greek in architecture and cult, at Dura in this period. It is, therefore, certain that Greek religion played no important part in the religious life of Parthian and Roman Dura even among its Greek-speaking population." Cf. also C. B. Welles, "The Gods of Dura-Europos", *Beiträge zur alten Geschichte und deren Nachleben. Festschrift F. Altheim*, vol. 2 (ed. R. Stiehl and H. E. Stier; Berlin 1969), 54-55 and 60.

[42] E. Will, *Les Palmyréniens. La Venise des sables (Ier siècle avant IIIème siècle après J.-C.)* (Paris 1992), 92-93.

Palmyrene origin who produced sculptures for Palmyrenes as well as for the other inhabitants of Dura-Europos. The latter reliefs are Palmyrene in style, but not in content.[43]

In order to establish the possible influence of various cults of Semitic and Arabic origin on Greek religion, we have to determine whether or not these cults remained confined to particular social groups of the population of Dura. The present study of the religion of the Palmyrene community in Dura-Europos concentrates upon this question and thereby aims to establish the possible influence of this group on the religion of the city and vice versa. For now, the discrepancy between the inscriptions and archaeological material may be taken as a warning against an over general characterization of the city's culture and religion as either Greek or oriental. It is safest to conclude with Fergus Millar that we are dealing with a partial adjustment of a Greek city to its local environment.[44]

Roman Dura-Europos

Following the Parthian war of Lucius Verus in 164 or 165 CE, Dura came under Roman rule, remaining in Roman hands until the city was conquered by the Sassanians around the middle of the third century CE.[45] This period of Roman occupation is conventionally divided into two periods; from 165 CE until about 190 CE, and from 190 CE till the fall of the city. During the first forty years

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[43] *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 236-242. Of this group of sculptures the relief representing Zeus Kyrios-Baalshamin is probably related to a group of worshippers which is at least partly of Palmyrene origin. Cf. the discussion of this relief in the appendix, below, 220-221, and Chapter IV, 115 ff. In contrast, the relief representing Aphlad was commissioned by people from Anath. A third relief belonging to this group, a relief representing Hadad, was in all likelihood produced for the local market, for this god is not attested in Palmyra.

[44] Millar, *Roman Near East*, 446-447.

[45] Dura is mentioned in the trilingual 'Great Inscription of Shapur' on the Kaaba of Zoroaster, first discovered in 1936 near Persepolis, which gives a detailed account of the three main wars of Shapur I against the Romans from the Persian point of view: A. Maricq, "Res Gestae Divi Saporis", *Syria* 35 (1958), 245-260. It is generally assumed that the city was destroyed in 256 CE. This date has been derived mainly from the numismatic evidence found in the city. However, the excavated evidence for the date of the siege of Dura does not permit the degree of precision assumed by most scholars. A date of 255 is as acceptable as the conventional date of 256, while early 257 or even late 254 cannot be absolutely ruled out: S. James, "Dura-Europos and the Chronology of Syria in the 250s AD", *Chiron* 15 (1985), 120-122. M. Rostovtzeff, "Res Gestae Divi Saporis and Dura", *Berytus* 8 (1943), 53, furthermore proposed that the city was briefly occupied by the Sassanians in 253 CE, and quickly fell back into Roman hands before Shapur I finally eliminated it several years later. However, as James, *op. cit.*, 111-119, points out, there is no archaeological evidence from Dura to support this hypothesis.

Roman presence was moderate; during the last fifty years of its existence, however, Dura-Europos was a frontier fortress with a large Roman garrison.

From 194 CE, Dura-Europos and its outposts formed an outlying part of Severus' new province of Syria Coele, or 'Hollow Syria'. The assignment of Dura and this sector of the middle Euphrates to Syria Coele was quite reasonable; the primary role of the garrisons there was to protect the route leading to North Syria and ultimately to Antioch. Especially when the new Persian dynasty came to power in about CE 224, this function became acute, as the first Sasanian kings changed the defensive policy of the Parthian kings and repeatedly invaded Roman territory along the Euphrates. The defensive role played by the Euphrates in the struggle between the Persian and the Roman empires had a profound effect on the city. Around the middle of the third century CE Dura was prepared for a Persian siege. Sloping embankments were built on both the inside and the outside of the fortification walls, forcing people to desert the buildings adjacent to the city walls. The measures were in vain: Dura was captured by the Persians and soon deserted. The sloping ramp was not cleared away and the most spectacular finds from the city come from the area adjacent to these fortifications.

Despite the fact that the Roman occupation lasted less than a century, by far the greatest quantity of relevant data and the most sensational finds can be ascribed to this period, in particular to the third century CE. This at least partly accounts for the much more marked intermingling of different elements, in language, personal nomenclature, art and religion, than is apparent from the relatively scanty remains of Parthian Dura. Apart from Greek, Palmyrene and Safaitic, we now encounter Latin, Syriac, Aramaic, Hebrew and Middle Persian.[46] The period is marked by the building of several new shrines, the most important of which are the Mithraeum, the Christian building and the synagogue.

The Roman army in Dura

Little is known about the first forty years of Roman occupation: there are no military papyri dated before 208 CE, and epigraphic material related to the military is scarce. As the number of soldiers stationed in the city appears to have been small, it appears that Dura did not yet play an important part in the Euphrates *limes* of the Roman Empire and it is not surprising that life remained much as it had been earlier. The Parthian court orders were still in use, and the city was still governed by the στρατηγὸς καὶ ἐπιστάτης τῆς πόλεως, recruited from the Macedonian aristocracy. The *Europaioi*, with their characteristically Macedonian names, continue to dominate our sources and presumably still formed the upper class of society.[47]

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[46] G. D. Kilpatrick, "Dura-Europos: The Parchments and Papyri", *GRBS* 5 (1964), 215-225.

The earliest military unit to appear after the Romans took possession of Dura is a body of Palmyrene archers. These are named in two inscriptions from the Mithraeum bearing dates of 168 and 170-171 CE respectively, and in an undated relief dedicated to Iarḥibol which was found in a Palmyrene sanctuary, the so-called 'temple of the Gaddê'. They were commanded by a *strategos*, a title which suggests that they were not an official unit of the Roman imperial army. Although they belonged to the Roman garrison, they were probably a division of the municipal militia of Palmyra. It has frequently been suggested that Palmyrene archers had already been stationed in Dura during the Parthian period, charged with the protection of caravans, but there is no archaeological material by means of which this hypothesis can be supported.[48] It is a vexed issue whether Palmyrene caravans halted in Dura-Europos, and even if they did pass the city, it is questionable whether Palmyrene soldiers would have been allowed to enter. From the beginning of the Common Era Palmyra was part of the Roman Empire, and it is unlikely that soldiers from a Roman city would have been stationed in a Parthian town.

From 180 or 190 CE onwards, with the Parthian wars of Septimius Severus and Caracalla, the situation altered drastically. At this time large numbers of Roman soldiers were stationed in the city. The arrival of these units had a profound effect upon the spatial, political, social and economic organization of Dura. To a certain extent, Dura was converted into a fortress. Around 209-216 CE the northern part of the city, about one-quarter of the total area, was confiscated by the army and transformed into a Roman military camp, separated from the remainder of the city by a brick wall.[49] Its former residents were forced to settle elsewhere in the city: private houses were now used as barracks and existing temples, such as the temple of Zeus in block J 3-5 and the nearby temple of Azzanathkona, came to be used primarily by the military. In addition, new buildings were erected to meet the needs of the army. Among these is the *praetorium*, which formed the centre of the camp, and a temple dedicated to Jupiter Dolichenus, a deity who was very popular among soldiers.[50] At the northern edge of the plateau above the river, an imposing building was erected to house the staff and offices of the *dux ripae*, the Roman district commander.[51] The rest of the city was also partly occupied by the military. A number of soldiers were billeted in private houses outside the camp. Around the main gate a strong detachment of soldiers was stationed and a shrine dedicated to the Fortune of Dura was located nearby. A bath for the use of soldiers was built in this area in the third century.

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[47] *TEAD PP*, 6 and nos. 17 and 25; Welles, "Population of Roman Dura", 254-255.

[48] Cf. below, note 133.

[49] Rostovtzeff, *Dura-Europos and its Art*, 25-27.

The first regular unit to appear is the Cohors II Ulpia Equitata, attested in Dura late in Commodus' reign (180-190 CE).[52] However, most of our information on the composition of the garrison stationed at Dura dates from the years 209-216 CE. During the reign of Caracalla (211-217 CE) vexillations of at least three legions, the IV Scythia, the XVI Flavia Firma, and the III Cyrenaica, contributed to the garrison, and it is also possible that soldiers of the III Fretensis were at Dura at this time. The vast bulk of our evidence concerns the Cohors XX Palmyrenorum.[53] The numeral in the name of this regiment is explained by the fact that it became the twentieth cohort in the province of Syria at the time it was created.[54] It is only attested in Dura-Europos and its disappearance coincides with the fall of the city to the Persians around the middle of third century CE. Apparently, therefore, the Cohors XX Palmyrenorum was especially created to serve in Dura-Europos and the region under its jurisdiction. It is first attested in Dura in 208 CE, but it already existed in 192 CE and may perhaps date back to the time of Marcus Aurelius' visit to Syria in 175-176 CE.[55] Possibly the Palmyrene archers stationed at Dura formed the nucleus of this Cohors.

For the years after 217 CE we possess far less information. There are, however, no reasons to assume that the garrison became smaller after the time of Caracalla. The aggressive policy of the new Persian dynasty certainly encouraged the Romans to station a large garrison in the city, consisting of many different components. The Palmyrene cohort certainly stayed at Dura and in addition a number of legionaries were stationed in the city.[56] How the garrison of Dura was organized we do not know. During the final years of its existence, perhaps by the time of Elagabalus (218-222 CE), a district commander, the *dux ripae*, exercised the supreme command in the city, but there is no direct evidence for the extent of the *ripa* under his jurisdiction. Presumably it included all the Roman troops stationed between the Chabur in the north and Belesi Biblada, just above Anath, in the south.[57]

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[50] M. P. Speidel, *The Religion of Iupiter Dolichenus in the Roman Army* (EPRO 63; Leiden 1978); M. Hörig, "Iupiter Dolichenus", *ANRW* 17.4 (1984), 2136-2179.

[51] *TEAD* IX, 3.

[52] *TEAD PP*, 24-25.

[53] *TEAD PP*, 26-46.

[54] D. L. Kennedy, "Cohors XX Palmyrenorum. An Alternative Explanation of the Numeral", *ZPE* 53 (1983), 214-216.

[55] D. L. Kennedy, "The Cohors XX Palmyrenorum at Dura-Europos", *The Roman and Byzantine Army in the East* (ed. E. Dabrowa; Cracow 1994), 89-98, with references to earlier literature.

Society and economy of Roman Dura

Around the end of the second century CE the city acquired the status of *colonia*. A *boulè* (city council or senate) was installed, which replaced the former *epistates* of the city, and at the same time, we note a fundamental change in Dura's social composition.[58] Compared to the previous period, Graeco-Macedonian names disappear almost completely from our record. The fate of the members of the former ruling class is not clear: possibly they were simply reduced to poverty; possibly some of them emigrated to more thriving cities. In this period Semitic names are in the majority, but they are not the same names as before.[59] It is therefore obvious that new people came to Dura in the third century CE, most of whom must have been soldiers. The national and ethnic origin of these soldiers is a complicated matter though. The influx of Semitic names suggests that the majority came from Syria, and it is known that natives dominated at least several of the regiments that were stationed in Dura. Some of their members may even have been recruited in Dura and its territory.[60] Auxiliary units such as the Cohors XX Palmyrenorum were named after the place from which they were originally recruited. It is known that from the second century onwards replacements to auxiliary units were mainly drawn from the province where the detachment was stationed: in view of the proximity of Palmyra to Dura, it is reasonable to suppose that the Palmyrene element in this unit remained dominant throughout its history.[61] This is confirmed by the many typical Palmyrene names among its members. However, the personal names of people belonging to this regiment show that the Palmyrene component was by no means exclusive.[62]

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[56] We are best informed on the vexillations of the XVI Flavia Firma: *TEAD PP*, no. 64 (221 CE); *TEAD* VI, 495, no. 843 (between 222-235 CE); *TEAD PP*, no. 43 (dated during the reign of Gordian). In addition we know of a detachment of the IV Scythia (*TEAD PP*, nos. 32 (254 CE), and 95 (250-251 CE), and a vexillation of the Cohors II Paphlagonum and perhaps the Cohors II Equestris (*TEAD* IX, 3, 110-114, nos. 971-972). Doubtless a number of units and detachments spent time at Dura without leaving a record of their stay.

[57] Gawlikowski, "Palmyre et l'Euphrate", 61-62.

[58] The last reference to the *stratègos* of the city dates from about 200 CE: *TEAD* II, 148-151. The *boulè* is first mentioned in documents dated to the beginning of the third century CE: *TEAD PP*, nos. 27, 38, and 32. Other references to this institution likewise date from the third century CE: Cumont, *Fouilles*, 408, no. 50; *TEAD* III, 51-52, no. D.149; *TEAD* IV, 170, no. 343; *TEAD* IV, 81, no. 184; *TEAD* VI, 294, no. 784; Cumont, *Fouilles*, 364-366, no. 9c. Since all instances date from the third century CE, Bellinger's suggestion, *TEAD* III, 162, that the *boulè* was introduced in the Seleucid period and persisted through the Parthian period, is unlikely. It is not known when exactly Dura became a Roman *colonia*. Some assume this happened during the reign of Severus, others opt for the reign of Caracalla: Welles, "Population of Roman Dura", 262.

[59] Welles. "Population of Roman Dura". 265: *TEAD PP.58*

Veterans bought land and settled in considerable numbers in Dura and the surrounding villages.[63] In addition, people settled in the city to sell the military food, earthenware, uniform and equipment of all sorts, and to provide the soldiers with every kind of entertainment.[64] These people mainly came from various parts of Syria. We know of a group of entertainers originating from Zeugma, and the famous Syriac contract of sale from the year 243 CE refers to a female slave bought by an inhabitant of Carrhae in Edessa.[65] The Jewish community forms a separate element of the society of Roman Dura.[66] In all likelihood it originated partly from Mesopotamia, and kept in touch with this region.[67] Frequently, however, it is difficult to be more specific about the origin of the inhabitants of the city during this period.

Dura's new function as a military fortress profoundly influenced the economic situation in the city and its territory. Trading with and performing compulsory services for the Roman army were the major business during the last fifty years of Dura's existence. As a consequence, rich merchants disappeared and a multitude of small businessmen and craftsmen took their place. However, Rostovtzeff's statement that Dura was dying before the Sassanians killed it exaggerates the deplorable state of its economic situation.[68] Although the large military population was a heavy burden upon Dura's population, the city still functioned as the centre of an agricultural district along the Euphrates.[69] Long-distance trade with major cities in northern Syria declined, but regional trade with northern Mesopotamia still prospered.[70] Business life in the city is illustrated by the archives found in the house of Nebuchelus, dating from the middle of the third century CE. His affairs were varied, but purely local and on a very small scale.[71]

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[60] D. Forni, *Il recrutamento delle legioni da Augusto a Diocleziano* (Rome-Milan 1953), 222-223, 228 and 233; *TEAD PP*, 58; D. L. Kennedy, "The Military Contribution of Syria to the Roman Imperial Army", *The Eastern Frontier of the Roman Empire* (ed. D. French and C. Lightfoot; BAR International Series 553; Oxford 1989), 236-237.

[61] *TEAD PP*, 35; E. D. Francis, "Mithraic Graffiti from Dura-Europos", *Mithraic Studies*, vol. 2 (ed. J. R. Hinnells; Manchester 1975), 434.

[62] *TEAD PP*, 61; Welles, "Population of Roman Dura", 271.

[63] *TEAD PP*, no. 19; Welles, "Population of Roman Dura", 271; E. Dabrowa, "La garnison romaine à Doura-Europos. Influence du camp sur la vie de la ville et ses conséquences", *Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellonskiego* DCXIII. Prace Historyczne Z. 70 (1981), 68.

[64] Welles, "Population of Roman Dura", 260; Dabrowa, "Garnison romaine à Doura-Europos", 69-72.

[65] H. J. W. Drijvers and J. F. Healy, *The Old-Syriac Inscriptions of Edessa and Osrhoene. Texts, Translations and Commentary* (Leiden 1999), 232-236.

[66] Mercantile activities of members of the Jewish community around 200 CE are apparent from the designation *apothèqai*, found inscribed on a door jamb of room 7. This title suggests that the man in question was an overseer of warehouses or a shopkeeper: *TEAD Synagogue*, 275-276, no. 22. On the increasing wealth of the Jewish community as a result of supplying services to the Roman army, see *TEAD Synagogue*, 334-335.

[67] *TEAD Synagogue*, 330-336.

Palmyra

Palmyra, the Greek name of Semitic Tadmor, is located in the Syrian desert halfway between the coast and the Euphrates river, and owes its existence to the spring known as the Efqa (fig. 1).[72] Almost all our information stems from the first three centuries CE. It is the caravan trade that made the city wealthy, and Palmyra has therefore justly been called a caravan city.[73] From the moment we see it emerging as an urban centre around the beginning of the Common Era, it developed step by step from an average oasis settlement into a 'normal' Graeco-Roman city.[74] At the end of the third century CE the famous Palmyrene queen Zenobia marched against her Roman overlords and conquered large parts of the Eastern Roman Empire. Eventually, however, the Palmyrene army was defeated by the Roman emperor Aurelian, whose troops conquered Palmyra in 272 CE. The city never again rose to its former power, becoming an outpost in the Syrian desert. In recent years Palmyra has regained some of its former splendour, due to the increasing number of tourists who come to visit its impressive ruins (fig. 3).

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[68] Rostovtzeff, *Dura-Europos and its Art*, 31.

[69] *TEAD PP*, nos. 25 (180 CE), and 26 (227 CE).

[70] This follows from the small bronze issues from these regions which were found in the city: *TEAD Coins*, 207-209.

[71] *TEAD* IV, 139-143.

[72] The best general introduction to Palmyra is still J. Starcky and M. Gawlikowski, *Palmyre. Edition revue et augmentée des nouvelles découvertes* (Paris 1985).

[73] M. Rostovtzeff, *Caravan Cities. Petra, Jerash, Palmyra, Dura* (Oxford 1932).

[74] Emphasized by Millar, *Roman Near East*, 319-336.

Because of its location and economic function, Palmyra was a meeting point between East and West. This resulted in a culture and a religion which has often been labelled syncretistic. Although it is possible to detect the heterogeneous origin of some of the elements that make up the culture of Palmyra, it is more appropriate to speak of a culture that is distinctively Palmyrene. Its inhabitants adopted elements of different origin, but they reinterpreted them and fitted them into their own culture, which was itself already a mixture, for the population of Palmyra consisted of groups of different origins which had settled in the oasis in the course of its history.[75] Most were of Aramaic or Arab descent, but each had its own cultural and religious traditions.[76]

Habitation in the oasis reaches back to the second millennium BCE, but little is known about its history before the Common Era. A settlement by the name of Tadmer is mentioned in several cuneiform texts and some remains of a city of that period have been found beneath the main temple mound.[77] The city is described in II Chronicles 8:4 as a foundation of King Solomon, who is said ‘to have built

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[75] Drijvers, *Edessa*, 17-18; M. Gawlikowski, “L'hellénisme et les dieux de Palmyre”, *Ο ΕΛΛΗΝΙΣΜΟΣ ΣΤΗΝ ΑΝΑΤΟΛΗ* (International Meeting of History and Archaeology, Delphi 6-9 November 1986; Athens 1991), 245-246.

[76] Throughout this study ‘Arab’ is used in the sense of ‘nomadic’, or of ‘nomadic origin’, viz. as a reference to a way of life. This meaning tallies with the history of its application (viz. Assyrian *aribi*) and accords with its use in the period under discussion: R. Zadok, *On West Semites in Babylonia during the Chaldaean and Achaemenian Periods. An Onomastic Study* (Jerusalem 1977), 192; M. Gawlikowski, “Les arabes de Syrie dans l'antiquité”, *Immigration and Emigration within the Ancient Near East. Festschrift E. Lipiński* (ed. K. van Lerberghe and A. Schoors; Leuven 1995), 87.

[77] Formerly, the name was thought to derive from *tamar*, ‘palm’, but this explanation is rejected in recent studies. Instead, it is suggested that the name Tadmor derives from the West Semitic root *dmr*, ‘to observe’. Hence the name of city means ‘observation post’: M. Gawlikowski, “Le tadmoréen”, *Syria* 51 (1974), 92. Old Assyrian merchants went to Tadmer around 2000 BCE: G. Eisser and J. Lewy, *Die altassyrischen Rechtsurkunden von Kûltepe*, vols. 3-4 (*MVAG* 35. 3-4), no. 303. Tablets from Mari dated in the eighteenth century BCE record that caravans with diplomatic status passed the oasis: G. Dossin, *Archives royales de Mari*, vol. 5 (Paris 1952), no. 23; idem XV (1954), 135, no. 2. Recently published texts from Mari show that the oasis was a station between the kingdom of Mari in the east and the kingdom of Qaṭna in the west at the beginning of the second millennium BCE. In addition, it was a halting post for nomadic clans such as the Suteans: F. Joannès, “Palmyre et les routes du désert au début du deuxième millénaire av. J.-C.”, *M.A.R.I.* 8 (1997), 393-415. A tablet from Emar dated in the thirteenth century BCE records two witnesses from the city of Tadmer: D. Arnaud, *Recherches aud pays d'Aštata/Emar*, vol. 6.3 (Paris 1986), no. 21. The city is named in the annals of Tiglath-Pileser I (1115-1077 BCE), who defeated ‘Arameans of Tadmar’: A. K. Grayson, *Assyrian Royal Inscriptions*, vol. 2 (Wiesbaden 1976), nos. 3, 83 and 4, 97. The archaeological remains are described by R. du Mesnil du Buisson, “Première campagne de fouilles à Palmyre”, *CRAI* 1966, 158-190; idem, “La découverte de la plus ancienne Palmyre”, *BiOr* 24 (1967), 20-21; D. Bielinska, “Small Finds from Pre-classical Palmyra”, *Studia Palmyrenskie* 10 (1997), 19-22, discusses several pottery fragments which show that Palmyra had contacts with the western part of Syro-Palestine.

Tadmor in the wilderness and all the store cities, which he built in Hamath'. The attribution of the building of Tadmor to Solomon owes more to legend than to authentic history although it is accepted by the Jewish historian Josephus, who describes the important features of the settlement 'which is called Tadmor by the Syrians and Palmyra by the Greeks'.[78] Josephus' description of the city and its surroundings is fairly accurate, but applies to the first century CE and not to Solomon's days. According to Appian, Antonius' forces tried to raid the city in 41 BCE.[79] On this occasion the Palmyrenes left the city and fled across the Euphrates, whose banks they prepared to defend with their expert bowmen.

Appian's suggestion that Tadmor was a thriving settlement before the Common Era is certainly correct. The earliest known Palmyrene inscription is dated 44-43 BCE.[80] The fact that Roman troops set out to plunder the oasis suggests that it was already wealthy in those days. Although there is hardly any evidence to show for it, it may be presumed that Palmyra was already an important city in Hellenistic times, with many temples and residential quarters situated between the temple of Bel and the Efqa source.[81] We hardly know anything about the social organization of the oasis and the origin of its inhabitants in this period, although the population of Palmyra appears to have been mainly Aramaic speaking. From the first century BCE onwards, Arab groups of different origin settled in the oasis and were assimilated into the indigenous population.

The rise and growth of the Palmyrene caravan trade

The fact that Palmyra was a thriving settlement in the first century BCE suggests that long-distance trade had already begun at this time - indeed the few archaeological remains dating from this period do point to close cultural contacts with Mesopotamia.[82] Although it remains problematic whether trade played a role in these contacts, there are several indications that this was indeed the case. One of the earliest Palmyrene inscriptions testifying to the Roman presence in the city records that around 18 CE Germanicus sent a Palmyrene named Alexandros on a diplomatic mission towards the region of Mesene in the east and the kingdom of Emesa in the west.[83] Rome probably chose Alexandros for a mission to these regions because he had contacts there, and as Mesene and Emesa are known to have played an important role in the caravan trade at a later date, they probably were of a commercial nature. By 19 and 24 CE respectively, colonies of Palmyrene merchants were living in Babylon and Seleucia.[84] The fact that Palmyrene merchants stationed in these cities contributed to the rebuilding of the temple of Bel in 19 and 24 CE, points towards the profitable and well-established character of this commercial enterprise. Babylon and Seleucia were situated on the Euphrates route towards the Persian Gulf, which suggests that Palmyrenes had contacts further south as well.

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[78] Josephus, *Ant.* VIII, 6. I.

[79] Appian, *BC* V, 9.37-38.

[80] *PAT* no. 1524 (wrongly dated to 44 CE, instead of 44 BCE).

[81] D. van Berchem, "Le plan de Palmyre", ***Palmyre. Bilan et perspectives*** (ed. E. Frézouls; Strasbourg 1976), 165-173. That so little of this period has been found is partly due to the substantial building activities at the beginning of the Common Era, and partly to the concentration of archaeological activities on the monumental centre of the town, whereas the area south of the wadi has largely been neglected.

[82] H. Seyrig, "Palmyra and the East", *JRS* 40 (1950), 1-7; D. Schlumberger, ***L'orient hellénisé*** (Paris 1970), 75.

Although Palmyrene commercial contacts with Babylonia may date back to the first century BCE, it was only around the beginning of the Common Era that Palmyra emerged as a major emporium or 'desert port'. The rise of Palmyrene commerce at this time resulted from the combined action of several geographical, political and social factors. The fact that the site was well provided with water was of course an important condition for its development into a caravan city, but it was only with the solid establishment of Roman power in the area from 64 BCE onwards that Palmyrene trade came to flourish. In addition, an entrepreneurial spirit awakened and developed amongst the nomadic groups inhabiting the region surrounding Palmyra. Last but not least, the growing importance of Palmyrene trade was closely related to the slackening Nabatean control of trade and trade routes over the southern parts of the Arabian peninsula and the Far East.

The rise of Palmyra in the first century CE coincides with active Roman involvement in the city. The elder Pliny wrote of Palmyra as having a quasi independent status between the two great empires of Rome and Parthia but this remark is certainly anachronistic for Pliny's time.[85] From the beginning of the first century onwards Palmyra was subject to Rome and this involvement was further increased when the Roman *limes* was extended south into Arabia, which was annexed in 106 CE.[86] Palmyra regained some of its independence after Hadrian visited the city in 129 CE, when he granted it the status of *civitas libera*, but it became a colony under Septimius or Caracalla: hence Rome exercised full control over Palmyra during most of its golden age.[87]

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[83] *PAT* no. 2754 (n.d.). J. F. Matthews, "The Tax Law of Palmyra: Evidence for Ecomomic History in a City of the Roman Near East", *JRS* 74 (1984), 164.

[84] *PAT* nos. 0270 and 1353 (cf. below, Chapter II, 64-65).

[85] *Hist. Nat.* 5. 88.

[86] Millar, *Roman Near East*, 34-35. For the annexation of Arabia, see G. W. Bowersock, *Roman Arabia* (Harvard 1984), 76-89.

Several factors explain the interest Rome displayed in the control and development of the oasis. Until Roman troops conquered the Euphrates south of Zeugma in 165 CE, Palmyra was situated on the easternmost border of the Empire. In those days Rome and Parthia were sworn enemies and Palmyra functioned as an intermediary - politically, but first and foremost economically. Situated on the shortest route from the Euphrates to the Syrian coast, the oasis was strategically a desirable spot, useful against a possible Parthian threat from the east. In addition, the oasis was situated on the shortest route from the Syrian coast to important trading centres in Mesopotamia. The Palmyrenes managed to lay a firm hold on the Euphrates as a trade route, the political and military control of which was in the hands of the Parthians, with whom, in contrast to the Romans, the Palmyrenes entertained friendly relationships. The Palmyrenes possessed trading centres in various cities in southern Babylonia, such as Vologesias and Spasinou Charax, and it was Palmyrene caravans that supplied the Romans with goods from the East.

Simultaneously, the rise of the Palmyrene caravan trade resulted from the entrepreneurial spirit of its indigenous population, mostly of Aramaic and Arab descent. It was the desert between the city and the Euphrates, with its constant threat of nomads, that provided the greatest danger for the caravans. Neither the Romans nor the Parthians effectively controlled this region, which functioned as a buffer zone between the opposing parties. Before Palmyra rose to power, bands of brigands roaming the desert had forced merchants to follow the Euphrates all the way north to Seleucia on the Euphrates, more often called Zeugma, 'the bridge'. The Palmyrenes managed to control the desert between their city and the Euphrates by both military force and diplomacy, and thereby opened up the desert for the caravans. A part of Palmyra's urban elite was made up of families and followers of Bedouin chieftains, who had been drawn originally from the desert; as Bedouin sheikhs these Palmyrene entrepreneurs had connections and alliances with people who held on to the traditional nomadic way of life.[88] The nomads were an abundant source of recruits for the military units that protected the caravans from the hostilities of rival groups; at the same time, the prospect of regular revenues incited nomadic groups to settle in the city or its vicinity.

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[87] H. Seyrig, "Le statut de Palmyre", *Syria* 22 (1941), 164 and 171. This does not imply that Palmyra had become a free city: Millar, *Roman Near East*, 325.

[88] E. Will, "Marchands et chefs des caravanes à Palmyre", *Syria* 34 (1957), 262-277; Dijkstra, *Life and Loyalty*, 13-14 and 85.

The majority of inscriptions referring to the caravan trade that have been found in Palmyra so far date from the relatively short period between Hadrian's visit to the city and the death of his successor Antonius Pius, i.e. between 131 and 161 CE.[89] The heyday of Palmyrene caravan traffic is therefore generally attributed to the middle of the second century CE. The flourishing of the oasis during this period is confirmed by the large amounts of money that were spent on building activities. The 'Great Colonnade' traversing the city from west to east was erected at this time, the rebuilding of important sanctuaries, such as the temples of Baalshamin and Allat, is dated to the middle of the second century CE, and some of the most splendid tombs and mausolea date back to the same period.[90] When caravan trade increased in the first century CE, the population of Palmyra grew explosively. The majority of these newcomers were Arabs.[91] From the second century onwards, at the heyday of Palmyra's commercial success, nomadic groups settled in the hill-country north-west of Palmyra and applied themselves to the breeding of pack-and riding-animals, thereby capitalising on the growing market in the city.[92]

The social organization of Palmyra

The most prominent feature of Palmyrene inscriptions dated in the first two centuries of the Common Era is the use of kinship terminology to denote both

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[89] For the relevant inscriptions compare the studies by R. Drexhage, *Untersuchungen zum römischen Osthandel* (Bonn 1988), 61-86, and M. Gawlikowski, "Palmyra and its Caravan Trade", *AAAS* 42 (1996), 141-143, with references for further reading. Of the thirty-four caravan inscriptions hitherto known, nineteen are dated between 131 and 161 CE, six are from the first century CE, and seven are dated later than 193 CE. The epigraphical silence between 161 and 193 CE is usually linked to the renewal of hostilities between Romans and Parthians under Marcus Aurelius (161-180 CE) and Lucius Verus (161-169 CE), as a result of which caravans ceased to set out. Lucius Verus, who campaigned successfully against the Parthians, temporarily restored the prospects for a safe journey. Though reduced, the trade continued until the 260s: Gawlikowski, "Palmyra and its Caravan Trade", 141.

[90] See the recent article by M. Baranski, "The Great Colonnade of Palmyra Reconsidered", *ARAM* 7 (1995), 37-42. For the building history of the temple of Allat and the temple of Baalshamin, see below, Chapter III, 78.

[91] Gawlikowski, "Arabes de Syrie", 84-85.

[92] *PNO* 130. D. P. Crouch, "A Note on the Population and Area of Palmyra", *MUSJ* 47 (1972), 241-250, estimates the population of Palmyra and its territory at its height at 150-200,000. Although this calculation probably is too high, Palmyra's population must have been considerable. Cf. Matthews, "Tax Law", 171.

physical and social relations. Genealogies figure prominently in Palmyrene inscriptions, the idea of shared patrilineal descent marking the different segments of Palmyrene society. In ascending order of inclusion, the inscriptions mention the individual, the family, a group of families or clan and the 'tribe'. At the basic level, the individual derived his identity from the family, which is known by the name of its most remote ancestor, who is mentioned at the end of a genealogy. The Palmyrene family was patrilinear (inheritance is through the male line) and patrilocal (the wife goes to live with her husband). In several cases the name of the ancestor is preceded by *bny*, 'the sons of'. In Palmyrene inscriptions this expression is poly-interpretable: it is used either descriptively, referring to actual kinsmen, or classificatorily. In the latter case its meaning ranges from 'lineage', to 'clan' to 'tribe'. At present, fifty-five names are known which are preceded by the expression *bny*, the majority of these instances probably referring to natural families. Several of the social groupings referred to as *bny* are described elsewhere as *dy mn pḥd bny X*, or *dy mn bny X*. They are now reckoned to have been fourteen. Some Greek inscriptions render such groupings φυλή, which is normally translated 'tribe'.[93]

In view of these various segments which characterize Palmyra's social organization it has frequently been labelled a tribal society.[94] Palmyra is taken to consist of a conglomeration of at least fourteen tribes of various origins. In the course of time a civic frame of reference is supposed to have developed alongside this tribal structure, without, however, eliminating it completely. To speak of the 'tribal organization' of Palmyrene society, though, is misleading for methodological as well as historical reasons.

Whereas anthropologists today are well aware of the ambiguous use of the term, no attempt is made to define what is meant by 'tribe' when applied to social groupings in Palmyra.[95] It is assumed that Palmyra's tribal organization reflects the nomadic origin of its inhabitants and resulted from their close contacts with the desert dwellers.[96] When used to describe the social organization of the Bedouin, though, 'tribe' denotes the highest level of social organization.[97] Tribes consist of various sections or 'clans', which in turn comprise families and households. In view of this usage, it is dubious whether all fourteen Palmyrene 'tribes' are adequately typified as such. It can be shown that a number of the social groupings defined as *dy mn pḥd bny X* consisted of interrelated but autonomous families who claimed common patrilineal descent.[98] In most instances there is no evidence that these so-called 'tribes' were anything but lineage groups that claimed descent from a common paternal ancestor, viz. 'clans'. In fact, the only groupings for which we have evidence that they comprised several lineage groups and thereby consituted a social structure at the level above the clan are those that are identified as φυλή in Greek inscriptions.[99]

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[93] M. Gawlikowski, *Le temple palmyrénien. Etude d'épigraphie et de topographie historique* (Palmyre VI; Warsaw 1973), 31-34; J. T. Milik, *Dédicaces faites par des dieux (Palmyre, Hatra, Tyr) et des thiases sémitiques à l'époque romaine* (Recherches d'épigrahie proche-orientale 1; Paris 1972), 16-40.

[94] Gawlikowski, *Temple*, 26-41; J. Teixidor, "Cultes tribaux et religion civique à Palmyre", *RHR* 197 (1980), 277-287; idem, "Nomadisme et sédentarisation en Palmyrène", *Sociétés urbaines, sociétés rurales dans l'Asie Mineur et la Syrie hellénistique et romaines* (Actes du colloques de Strasbourg novembre 1985; ed. E. Frézouls; Strasbourg 1987), 49-55. P. Piersimoni, "Who's Who at Palmyra: An Overview", *OLP* 25 (1994), 98; Dijkstra, *Life and Loyalty*, 83-85.

[95] On the origin and imprecision of the term, see J. W. Rogerson, *Anthropology in the Old Testament* (Oxford 1978), 86-121. On the various notions of the word 'tribe' as used by tribesmen themselves, see W. and F. Lancaster, "Thoughts on the Bedouinisation of Arabia", *PSAS* 18 (1988), 51-62.

Only five out of the fourteen presumed Palmyrene tribes are called φυλή; the Bene Mita, Komare, Mattabol, Ma^{c}zin and Claudia.[100] They were not, however, tribes in the traditional, nomadic sense, but new and articicficial constructions based upon territorial co-residence. During the reign of Nero (54-68 CE) the city was artificially split up into four quarters, a well-known feature of Graeco-Roman cities throughout the Roman Empire.[101] Each quarter was named after one of the existing Palmyrene clans, which were now designated φυλή.[102] In addition, each neighbourhood was assigned an extant sanctuary, which probably functioned as a focal point for the clan that gave its name to the quarter.[103] At the same time, a city council or senate (*boulè*) consisting of representatives of the four 'tribes' was installed.[104] The four 'tribes' performed certain municipal duties, acting together to carry out the decisions of the senate. Eventually the four 'tribes' and the clans existed side by side. In the course of time, however, the civic 'tribes' replaced the multitude of clans that had formerly characterized Palmyra's social landscape. It is tempting to suppose that the clans gathered under the name of the four 'tribes'. Although kinship terminology remained popular to denote social relations in Palmyra, the notion of the clan lost its importance in the second century CE, and disappeared almost completely in the subsequent century, as the result of an ongoing process of urbanization in which the city gradually replaced the clan as the most important frame of reference.[105] Eventually, the original genealogical connotations of the 'tribes' became blurred and only the civic connotation remained: saying that you belonged to one of the four 'tribes' or that you were an inhabitant of Palmyra were two ways of saying the same thing.[106] Tribal identity, though expressed in terms of consanguinity, was an artificial construct which was primarily based on territorial co-residence.[107]

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[96] Compare, for example, Teixidor, "Nomadisme et sédentarisation", 49-50: «Avant leur attachement au sol de la Palmyrène, les tribus mentionnées par les textes palmyréniens durent être, comme les tribus auxquelles appartenait les Patriarches bibliques, des nomades de petit bétail, moutonniers vivant à la limite du désert toujours en rapport avec les pays cultivés, auxquels ils empruntaient certaines manières de parler et de prier». Dijkstra, *Life and Loyalty*, 13: "The prominent presence of the nomadic component accounts for the conspicuous adherence to, and utilization of, segmentary principles for structuring social relationships, viz. that both physical and social relationships are couched in terms of kinship."

[97] On the (various) meaning(s) of 'tribe' in relation to Bedouin people, see D. F. Eickelman, *The Middle East. An Anthropological Approach* (2nd edition, New Jersey 1989), 126-150.

[98] P. Piersimoni, "The Palmyrene Prosopography" (unpublished PhD thesis; London 1995). Such lineage groups are habitually designated 'clan' in anthropological studies, because their claim of patrilineal descent is putative rather than demonstrable: M. D. Sahlins, *The Tribesmen* (Englewood Cliffs 1968), 15.

[99] The clan of Iedibel was part of the 'tribe' of the Ma^{c}zin; the clan of Bonna of the Bene Mita.

[100] φυλὴ Μειθηνῶν or Μηθηνῶν : *PAT* no. 1356 (56 CE) and M. Rodinson, "Une inscription trilingue de Palmyre", *Syria* 27 (1950), 137-142 (51 CE); φυλὴ Χομαρηνῶν: *PAT* no. 1352 (24 CE); φυλὴ Μαθθαβωλείων: *PAT* nos. 0270 and 0271 (19 and 17 CE); K. As^{c}ad and M. Gawlikowski, "New Honorific Inscriptions in the Great Colonnade of Palmyra", *AAAS* 36 (1986), 164-171, nos. 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8; φυλὴ Κλαυδίας: *Inv* VII, 2a (79-80 CE, without Palmyrene equivalent). The Bene Ma^{c}zin are never called φυλή in Greek inscriptions. In all likelihood, however, they were one of the four 'tribes' of Palmyra, referred to in other inscriptions (cf. below, note 102). It is noteworthy that, apart from the clans which came to function as the four 'tribes', *dy mn pḥd bny X* is never rendered φυλή in bilingual inscriptions from Palmyra (cf. *PAT* nos. 0296, 0297 and 0299 (179 CE), with respect to the Bene Zabdibol, *PAT* no. 0263 (108 CE), with respect to the Bene Gaddibol, *PAT* no. 1425 (81 CE), with respect to the Bene Agrud). The specific meaning the word in Palmyrene inscriptions contrasts with its ambiguity in inscriptions from the Hauran and in Safaitic inscriptions, where its meaning ranges from family to tribe: M. C. A. MacDonald, "Nomads in the Ḥawran in the Late Hellenistic and Roman Periods: A Reassessment of the Epigraphic Evidence", *Syria* 70 (1993), 353-354.

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[101] Starcky and Gawlikowski, *Palmyre*, 41. The usage to designate city quarters as 'tribes' is also attested in Bosra: M. Sartre, "Tribus et clans dans le Hawran antique", *Syria* 59 (1982), 77-91.

[102] The 'four tribes of Palmyra' are mentioned in three inscriptions: *PAT* nos. 2769 (171 CE); 1063 (198 CE); 1378 (199 CE). The artificiality of the four 'tribes' is apparent from the name of the fifth 'tribe', the φυλή Κλαυδιας. Although Milik, *Dédicaces*, 259-260, argues that this tribe originated from another city, all names are of good Palmyrene origin. In all likelihood, therefore, it has to be interpreted as a new name which designated an indigenous social group of some sort. The reference to the Emperor Claudius substantiates the hypothesis that the administrative reform of Palmyra took place in the first half of the first century CE. Cf. Gawlikowski, *Temple*, 47.

[103] Gawlikowski, *Temple*, 46-48. The four sanctuaries are listed by two inscriptions, *PAT* no. 0197 (132 CE), and H. J. W. Drijvers, "Greek and Aramaic in Palmyrene Inscriptions", *Studia Aramaica*, *JSS* suppl. 4 (1995), 34-38, pl. II (144 CE). The four 'tribes' and their sanctuaries are discussed by D. Schlumberger, "Les quatre tribus de Palmyre", *Syria* 48 (1971), 128-133.

[104] The *boulè* (Palmyrene *bwlʾ*) is first mentioned in an inscription dated 74 CE: J. Cantineau, "Tadmorea", *Syria* (1933), 174-176, no. 2B (74 CE) (this text is missing in *PAT*).

[105] Apart from the four 'tribes', only two family groupings are attested in Palmyrene inscriptions post-dating the second half of the second century CE: the Bene Zabdibol in 179 CE (*PAT* nos. 0296, 0297 and 0299); the Bene Attar in 179 CE (*PAT* no. 1143). Cf. Millar, *Roman Near East*, 332-333. A similar development can be observed in Hatra: J. B. Segal, "Arabs in Syriac Literature before the Rise of Islam", *JSAI* 4 (1984), 93.

Before the installation of the 'tribes', families and clans appear to have been the principal form of social organization in Palmyra, a system that is by no means confined to nomadic people, and is attested of old among settled communities in the Near East. Parallels are to be found in cities in ancient Babylonia and Syria, as well as early Israelite settlements.[108] Although it is certainly true that the inhabitants of Palmyra had contacts with the Bedouin and that nomads settled in Palmyra, the use of kinship terminology does not necessarily imply that all Palmyrene groups were of recent nomadic origin. Nor is it necessary to suppose that all had a nomadic origin to begin with. In fact, many names of the Palmyrene clans are Aramaic, which suggests that they had long since settled in the oasis.[109]

It may be inferred from modern anthropological studies of similar social organizations in the contemporary Near East that the kinship claims of lineage groups are putative rather than demonstrable. Kinship terminology is used primarily to denote closeness, not actual natural descent: hence the notion of patrilineal descent is relative, changing with actual social arrangements.[110] From this it may be inferred that Palmyrene clans were far more dynamic than the notion of common descent suggests. It may be presumed that newly arrived families joined existing clans and that co-residence or shared occupation resulted in the creation of new clans.[111] The predominant role of such closeness also explains why terms of kinship came to be used to designate the four quarters of the city.

As far as can be understood from the small number of sources pertaining to the social organization of the oasis before the Roman period, it had more in common with the organization of cities in ancient Babylonia and Syria than with the social organization of the Safaitic Bedouin. The little evidence at our disposal suggests that pre-Roman Palmyra consisted of a confederation of several lineage groups or clans. In the first half of the first century CE, representatives of these clans constituted the *gbl tdmryᵓ*, 'the assembly of Palmyrenes', from which in turn the municipal functionaries were chosen. This suggests that not the 'tribe' but the settlement functioned as a frame of reference alongside the clans.[112] Although it may be assumed that belonging to a clan was a prerequisite for having a say in this political body, we do not know whether all Palmyrene clans participated in the *gbl tdmryᵓ* or had an equal say in it. However, the prominent role of several of the clans in the political organization of Palmyra at a later date suggests the system was not egalitarian in the first century BCE. [113]

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[106] Schlumberger, "Quatre tribus", 126; Dijkstra, *Life and Loyalty*, 83-84.

[107] In this respect the Palmyrene 'tribes' resemble to the so-called 'tribes of Israel'. Although some Israelite tribal names are derived from anthroponyms, they were primarily based on co-residence. Hence, as in Palmyra, the tribal system of Israel was by no means of nomadic origin: K. van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria and Israel. Continuity and Change in the Forms of Religious Life* (Leiden 1996), 201-205.

[108] Van der Toorn, *Family Religion*, 20-26 (Babylonia); 153-177 (Syria); 183-205 (Israel), for a description of the social organization in these settlements.

[109] Cf. the discussion of the etymology of these names by Gawlikowski, *Temple*, 34-41. In this respect it is noteworthy that the names of three out of the four clans that came to function as the four 'tribes', the Bene Komare, Mita and Mattabol, are probably Aramaic, not Arabic.

[110] Eickelman, *Middle East*, 126-130.

[111] A good example of the first development is provided by the history of the Bene Maᶜzin. Around the beginning of the Common Era this 'tribe' grew explosively. At this time new groups joined the Bene Iedibel, a family belonging to the Bene Maᶜzin.

The diminishing importance of traditional social structures in Palmyra, and the increasing importance of a civic identity, can be ascribed to a number of factors. Roman engagement in Palmyra's municipal affairs will certainly have played its role in the organization of the city according to Graeco-Roman principles. Simultaneously, however, this shift within Palmyra's social organization is in keeping with internal social and economic developments. The rise of the caravan trade must have been a major incentive for the political unification of the various clans. The only Palmyrene inscription that testifies to joint action by two Palmyrene clans dates from the year 21 CE and records that members of the Bene Komare and the Bene Mattabol erected an honorary statue for someone of the Bene Komare because 'he had been their chief and had made peace between them'.[114] It is known that both clans were involved in the caravan trade at this time and this encouraged them to join forces.[115] Significantly, Palmyrene merchants living in trading centres in the East hardly ever identify themselves by means of their clan but act collectively.[116] The communal enterprise of at least some of the Palmyrene caravans can be deduced from two inscriptions that refer to 'the caravan of all the Palmyrenes'.[117] Although the majority of the caravans were organized by private persons, Palmyra's commerce was not a family affair, and the fact that statues of prominent Palmyrene merchants were erected in the city temple of Bel, as well as in the sanctuaries of the four 'tribes', shows that the commerce benefited the city as a whole.

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[112] This may be inferred from the designation *tdmryᵓ*, attested in several early texts. Cf. below, Chapter II, 47.

[113] In case it was equalitarian, the *gbl tdmryᵓ* may be compared to the 'men of the town' (*ᵓnšê hāᶜîr*) in ancient Israelite settlements, an institution in which all the men of the town had a say. *De facto*, however, the power to rule lay with the 'elders' (*zeqēnîm*), men from powerful families: H. Reviv, *The Elders in Ancient Israel* (Jerusalem 1989). In Old Babylonian cities the so-called 'elders' (*šibutum*), consisting of members of the local elite, constituted a political body: H. Klengel,"Älteste' in den Texten aus Ebla und Mari", *Reflets des deux fleuves. Mélanges A. Finet* (Akk Suppl. 6; ed. M. Lebeau and P. Talon; Leuven 1989), 61-65. A 'college of elders', γερουσία , is found in many cities in the Roman Empire, e.g. *IGLS* no. 4016, from Rouad.

[114] *PAT* no. 0261 (21 CE).

[115] The brother of the person honoured was praised by merchants living in Babylon in 24 CE: *PAT* no. 1352. A member of the Bene Mattabol was honoured by Palmyrenes and Greeks living in Seleucia in 19 CE: *PAT* no. 0270 (cf. the quotation of these two inscriptions, below, Chapter II, 64).

The organization of Palmyrene religion

Palmyra's religious configuration mirrors its social organization and follows the same development. In ascending order of inclusion, we may discern the religion of the individual and his family, the religion of the clan and the 'tribe', and the religion of the city. The various groups of different origins that settled in the oasis over the course of time introduced their family gods, resulting in a great religious diversity. The divine world of Palmyra comprised at least sixty deities originating from a variety of traditions. Most of these gods functioned as the ancestral deities of individuals and families, and apart from their names little is known about them. In turn, the families and their deities assembled in clan sanctuaries. Several of these, the sanctuaries of Allat and Baalshamin, of Aglibol and Malakbel, of Atargatis and of Arṣu, eventually came to function as the sanctuaries of a quarter or 'tribe'. In turn the representatives of these 'tribes' and their accompanying deities assembled in the communal temple, the temple of Bel.

During the first three centuries of the Common Era these three levels of religious organization changed, a development linked to the social development of the oasis during this period. Eventually, family, clan, and civic religion existed side by side but, as in Palmyrene society, the notion of the clan became less prominent over the course of time. In the first century of the Common Era the temple of Bel developed from a confederal into a civic sanctuary and analogous to the development of the four 'tribes' into civic units, the tutelary deities of the sanctuaries of the four 'tribes' gradually changed into gods of the city, although their relationship with particular groups of Palmyra's population never disappeared completely.[118] The diminished importance of traditional social structures is likewise apparent from the increasing importance of the so-called 'Anonymous God' in the second and third centuries CE. The cult of this god was not confined to a particular clan or family, but was primarily personal. In the religion of Palmyrene expatriates, civic religion was of primary importance. In the subsequent chapters we shall therefore return more than once to this aspect of Palmyrene religion and its development during the first three centuries of the Common Era.

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[116] *PAT* no. 0263 (108 CE), is the only exception to this rule.

[117] Drijvers, "Greek and Aramaic in Palmyrene Inscriptions", 34-36 (144 CE), and *PAT* no. 1366 (before 88 CE).

The social and economic position of the Palmyrene community in Dura-Europos

Information on the social and economic position of the Palmyrenes residing in Dura-Europos is extremely scarce. For the Parthian period, we have to rely on a limited number of archaeological remains, such as temples, inscriptions and figural representations. The dated inscriptions inform us about the history of the community and some of the personal names can be related to individuals mentioned in inscriptions from Palmyra, which enables us to define their social status. The location of buildings visited by Palmyrenes reflects the social and economic position of their clientele and their building history mirrors the economic development and the growth of the community over the course of time. We are slightly better informed about the status of Palmyrenes in Dura during the period the city was ruled by the Romans, as archaeological remains dating back to this period are more numerous. In addition, the military parchments and papyri provide information on Palmyrene soldiers serving in the Roman army.

The presence of Palmyrenes in Dura-Europos is first recorded in 33 BCE, when two Palmyrenes jointly founded a temple on the plateau outside the city walls.[119] Shortly before the middle of the first century CE they are attested within the city proper. In all likelihood Palmyrenes participated in the cult of Zeus Kyrios-Baalshamin, whose temple against the city walls was founded in the 20s of the first century CE. Around the same time Palmyrenes established a religious meeting place in block H1, on the spot where the temple of the Gaddê was built around the middle of the second century CE. The assembly room on the main street, which was used by Palmyrenes from 173 CE onwards, also dates back to the first century CE, but it is not certain whether the building was already used by Palmyrenes during the early period. For this reason it is excluded from the present discussion.

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[118] Below, Chapter II, 63, and Chapter III, 74.

[119] Appendix, inscription no. 1.

The evidence at our disposal suggests that the temples in the necropolis and in block H1 were exclusively used by Palmyrenes, whereas the temple of Zeus Kyrios-Baalshamin was probably the place of worship of a religious association consisting of both Palmyrenes and local inhabitants. It may be inferred from the dimensions of these three sanctuaries and their limited growth over the centuries that the Palmyrene community of Dura-Europos was fairly small in the Parthian period. In contrast to most Durene temples, the three Palmyrene sanctuaries have only one assembly room. The number of assembly rooms reflects the social, and perhaps religious, diversity of the clientele of the temples in Dura-Europos and the fact that the Palmyrene temples are provided only with one such room suggests that they served the needs of a single group of worshippers. Furthermore, the assembly rooms of the Palmyrene buildings have entrances separate from the sanctuaries proper, which suggests their function was not entirely religious. We may therefore conclude that Palmyrene migrants were a small and close-knit community during the Parthian period.

Around the middle of the second century CE the religious building in block H1 was completely rebuilt. The new temple, the so-called 'temple of the Gaddê', mirrors the wealth of the Palmyrene community during the last years of Parthian rule. However, it was only in the period of Roman occupation, from 165 onwards, that the Palmyrene community increased dramatically. This is apparent from the rebuilding and enlargement of pre-existing temples, as well as from the foundation of new sanctuaries. In 173 CE the Palmyrene temple in the necropolis doubled in size and in the same year the assembly room on the main street was rebuilt in order to accommodate a larger community.[120] The southern complex which was added to the temple of the Gaddê in all likelihood dates back to the end of the second century as well. The paintings in the *iwan* of a private house in block M7 inhabited by a Palmyrene are dated 194 CE.[121] Palmyrenes are first attested in the so-called 'temple of the Palmyrene gods' located in the north-west corner of the city during the period of Roman occupation. Possibly they confiscated parts of this temple, which was originally used by local residents, when the northern part of Dura was converted into a military camp at the beginning of the third century CE. At this time parts of the nearby temple dedicated to the goddess Artemis-Azzanathkona were converted into a military clerical office, which was partly used by Palmyrenes. They may, however, have settled down earlier in the temple of the Palmyrene gods, for in 167-168 CE Palmyrene archers founded a Mithraeum in its proximity.

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[120] Appendix, inscription no. 3, and 210-212; inscription no. 31, and 284-286.

[121] Appendix, inscription no. 32

It is clear that the growth in the number of Palmyrenes in Dura from 165 CE onwards is due to Palmyrene soldiers serving in the Roman army. The extension of the temple of Bel in the necropolis and the temple of the Gaddê suggest that the military mingled with the pre-existing Palmyrene community. Not all Palmyrenes residing in Roman Dura were soldiers, though: at least a part of the original community stayed when the city fell into Roman hands. The individual who initiated the rebuilding of the temple in the necropolis in 172 CE claims to descend from one of its founders.[122] The Palmyrene who had himself and his friends painted in his *iwan* by a Palmyrene craftsman in 194 CE was in all likelihood not a soldier, and the same probably holds true for the Palmyrene who dedicated the small relief to Bel which was found in the assembly room on the main street.[123] However, the occupation of these civilians is extremely difficult to establish. We know that Palmyrene painters were working in the city.[124] As for the majority, we may tentatively assume that they were merchants who supplied services to the Roman soldiers.[125]

The occupational activities of Palmyrenes who resided in Dura during the Parthian period are even more difficult to establish. In all likelihood Palmyrene craftsmen worked in the city in the first century CE. The sculptor of the relief representing Zeus Kyrios-Baalshamin was a Palmyrene who worked in a Durene workshop.[126] The remainder of the sources from this period do not specify the profession of Palmyrenes living in the city, but there are strong indications that they were for the most part involved in commercial activities. The first evidence of Palmyrenes in Dura-Europos shortly before the beginning of the Common Era coincides with a boom in the local economy, manifested in an outburst of building activity and the settlement of new people. It is reasonable to suppose that the favourable economic situation encouraged Palmyrene merchants to settle. The assumption that the Palmyrene community at this time was involved in mercantile activities is supported by the location of their sanctuaries and what is known of the background of the people who contributed to their building.

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[122] Appendix, inscription no. 3.

[123] Appendix, inscriptions nos. 36 and 31.

[124] Appendix, inscription no. 32.

[125] Marabelus, the partner of the Durene merchant Nebuchelus who was active around 235-240 CE, was in all likelihood of Palmyrene origin: *TEAD* IV, 138. This may be inferred from his name. The Palmyrene who financed the extension of the temple in the necropolis of Dura-Europos in 172 CE, is also called Marabelus. Cf. the discussion of this name in the appendix, below, inscription no. 2.

[126] Appendix, inscription no. 5.

The first evidence of Palmyrenes in Dura-Europos is a temple that was founded by two Palmyrenes in 33 BCE outside the city walls. The extra-mural location of this temple is extraordinary and in all likelihood results from the economic status of its visitors.[127] The best clue in this respect is provided by the ground plan of the temple. The sanctuary has an enclosure which contains a cistern, from which it may be inferred that the temple constituted part of a complex intended as a resting place for animals and their attendants.[128] Such resting places were normally situated outside the city and the function of the building therefore readily explains its location. Both merchants and soldiers possessed animals, and consequently we may assume that the temple was built for one or both of these two groups. The hypothesis that the Palmyrenes who frequented this temple were merchants is supported by the economic role of the clans to which the two dedicants of 33 BCE belonged. Both the Bene Komare and the Bene Gaddibol were involved in the Palmyrene caravan trade.[129] Shortly after the foundation of the temple in Dura-Europos, at the beginning of the first century CE, members of the Bene Komare participated intensively in Palmyrene trade with the East.[130]

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[127] Despite its location in the necropolis it is clear that the temple is not related to the cult of the dead: *TEAD* IX, II, 2. So far, various attempts have been made to explain its peculiar location. F. E. Brown, *TEAD* VII-VIII, 323-325, proposes a connection with the Babylonian Akitu festival. Brown's suggestion is followed by M. J. Geller, "The Last Wedge", *ZAVA* 87 (1997), 54, note 44. However, the interpretation of this building as an Akitu temple is most unlikely. Amongst other things this may be inferred from the fact that the sanctuary was dedicated in the month Sivan, and not in the month Nisan or Teshrit, the months that the New Year festival was celebrated. Susan Downey, *Mesopotamian Religious Architecture*, 98, suggests that the authorities of Dura did not allow the Palmyrenes to build a temple dedicated to their gods within the city at this relatively early date. This argument is not persuasive. Evidence of the religious situation within the city before the Common Era is lacking and hence we do not know whether foreign groups were allowed to worship their gods in the city. Furthermore, Downey's hypothesis cannot explain the growing popularity of the extra-mural temple in the Common Era, at a time when Palmyrenes are known to have lived in the town.

[128] We know of one bilingual Palmyrene inscription which refers to a resting place for the caravans (κατάλυμα συνοδιῶν): R. Mouterde and A. Poidebard, "La voie antique des caravanes entre Palmyre et Hit au IIe siècle ap. J.C. d'après une inscription retrouvée au s.-e. de Palmyre (Mars 1930)", *Syria* 12 (1931), 110, note 4.

[129] Gawlikowski, *Temple*, 31-41, for a discussion of these clans.

[130] In 24 CE, one of the members of the Bene Komare, Maliku, the son of Nesha, the son of Bolḥa, was honoured by Palmyrene merchants living in Babylon: *PAT* no. 1352. The same person was honoured by the Palmyrenes in 25 CE for his contribution to the temple of Bel: *PAT* no. 1353 (wrongly dated in 35 CE). Three years earlier Maliku's brother had been honoured by the Bene Komare and the Bene Mattabol: *PAT* no. 0261 (21 CE). Like the Bene Komare, the Bene Mattabol were involved in the caravan trade at an early date; one of its members, Yediᶜbel, the son of ᶜAzizu, was honoured in 19 CE by Palmyrenes and Greeks living in Seleucia: *PAT* no. 0270. Members of the Bene Gaddibol are known to have resided in Vologesias in 108 CE: *PAT* no. 0263.

The mercantile activities of Palmyrenes residing in Parthian Dura are confirmed by the location of the two sanctuaries they visited within the city walls, the temple of Zeus Kyrios-Baalshamin and the temple of the Gaddê. The sanctuary of Zeus Kyrios-Baalshamin was founded around 28 CE against the city walls, in an area of the town which was by then vacant. This suggests that the adherents of Zeus Kyrios-Baalshamin were outsiders who had arrived recently in the city. The hypothesis that this part of the town was built up by migrants during the first half of the first century CE is supported by the nearby sanctuary of Aphlad, which was founded by people from the village of Anath shortly after the temple of Zeus Kyrios-Baalshamin in 54 CE.[131] Like the Palmyrenes, the people from Anath were in all likelihood traders, attracted by the favourable economic situation in Dura-Europos in the first century CE. Equally telling is the location of a Palmyrene temple in block H 1, on the spot later occupied by the so-called temple of the Gaddê. This building is located in the proximity of the bazaar, which suggests that its visitors were merchants. Furthermore, its rebuilding around the middle of the second century CE was largely financed by members of the Naṣor family, which was powerful in Palmyra. It is well known that many of the politically influential Palmyrene families were involved in the caravan trade, and it is therefore reasonable to suppose that the members who resided in Dura were merchants as well.

The first evidence of Palmyrenes in Dura-Europos and the growth of the Palmyrene community over the centuries accords well with the development of Palmyra into an important city, which is in turn linked with the caravan trade. The foundation of a Palmyrene temple in 33 BCE substantiates the assumption that Palmyra was already an important city, entertaining commercial contacts with Babylonia, during the first century BCE.[132] The prosperity of the Palmyrene community around the middle of the second century CE, exemplified by the rebuilding of the temple of the Gaddê, coincides with the flowering of Palmyra and the heyday of the Palmyrene caravan trade. The history of the Palmyrene community in Dura-Europos therefore substantiates the hypothesis that it consisted of merchants.

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[131] *TEAD* V, 112-116, nos. 416-418.

[132] J. Starcky, "Palmyre", *DBSup* 6 (1960), col. 1079, notes that the dedication of the necropolis temple at Dura-Europos in 33 BCE substantiates the hypothesis that the Palmyrene long-distance trade dates back to the first century BCE. One could object to the identification of the dedicants as merchants involved in the caravan trade by arguing that the date of the inscription is too early. In Palmyra the caravan trade is first mentioned over forty years later; PAT no. 0270 (19 CE), is the earliest datable inscription referring to Palmyrene merchants living in the East. However, in view of the contacts Palmyra entertained with Babylonia (above, 22), Starcky's hypothesis may very well be correct.

Local versus international commerce

Although it may be inferred from the evidence listed above that the Palmyrenes residing in Parthian Dura were merchants, opinions differ as to the *kind* of trade they pursued. Since Franz Cumont, the excavators of Dura-Europos have been of the opinion that Palmyrene merchants in Dura were engaged in the caravan trade. In addition, they assume that Palmyrene soldiers, charged with the protection of the caravans, were stationed in the Parthian city. Dura-Europos is situated on the shortest route between Palmyra and the Euphrates, and hence it is concluded that it was a halting place for the Palmyrene caravans on their way to the Persian Gulf.[133] In contrast, experts in the field of Palmyra are of the opinion that the Palmyrene residents of Dura were involved not in the long-distance trade with Babylonia, but in the local trade between the two cities.[134] They rightly note that the Palmyrene military attested in Dura were serving in the Roman army and had nothing to do with the caravan trade.[135] Furthermore, the caravan track between the two cities has never been found: instead, Antoine Poidebard, who investigated the region from the air, found an ancient route between Palmyra and Hit, a city on the Euphrates about 300 kilometres south of Dura.[136] Following Poidebard's research, it is assumed that the caravans which left Palmyra took the road towards Hit, or alternatively, towards Anath or Phaliga-Circesium.[137] This interpretation is supported by the observations that inscriptions from Palmyra never mention Dura-Europos with respect to the caravan trade and that no archaeological materials from Dura-Europos testify to its involvement in the caravan trade.

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[133] Cumont, *Fouilles*, XXXIX-XLIX. Cumont's historical reconstruction became the basic assumption for the interpretation of the Palmyrene material found during the subsequent ten campaigns at Dura: *TEAD* I-IX. Not surprisingly the same opinion is expressed by Michael Rostovtzeff, the leader of Yale's excavations in Dura-Europos: *Caravan Cities*, 93-104; "Deux notes sur des trouvailles à Doura-Europos", *CRAI* 1935, 302-304; "Le gad de Doura et Seleucos Nicator", *Mélanges Syriennes R. Dussaud* I, (Paris, 1939), 281-282; idem, *Dura-Europos and its Art*, 18-20; idem, *Social and Economic History*, 157, 268-269, 575-76, note 15. However, Cumont's knowledge of Dura was confined to the temple of the Palmyrene gods and the temple of Artemis. As became clear from later finds, neither of these temples provide firm proof of a Palmyrene presence before the Roman period, let alone of their military presence, as Cumont suggested. Despite the fact that doubts arose as early as 1935 (compare below, note 134), the hypothesis was there to stay: Mouterde and Poidebard, "Voie antique des caravanes", 113-114; *InvD*, 66-67; *TEAD PP*, 24; Perkins, *Art of Dura-Europos*, 3-5; Francis, "Mithraic Graffiti from Dura-Europos", 426; S. B. Matheson, *Dura-Europos. The Ancient City and the Yale Collection* (YUAG; New Haven 1982) 15; M.-L. Chaumont, "Etudes d'histoire parthe V: la route royale des parthes de Zeugma à Séleucie du Tigre d'après l'Itinéraire d'Isidore de Charax", *Syria* 61 (1984), 92; J. F. Matthews, "Tax Law", 169; D. L. Kennedy, "Ana on the Euphrates in the Roman Period", *Iraq* 48 (1986), 104.

[134] The assumption that Dura-Europos was a halting place on the Palmyrene route to the east was first questioned in 1935 by Daniel Schlumberger in his review of Rostovtzeff's "Caravan Cities", *Gnomon* 11 (1935), 87-93. Schlumberger's criticism was primarily prompted by the research of A. Poidebard, *Le trace de Rome* (Paris 1937). Schlumberger is followed by Will, "Marchands et chefs de caravane", 262; Gawlikowski, "Palmyre et l'Euphrate", 55; J. Teixidor, "Un port romain du désert. Palmyre et son commerce d'Auguste à Caracalla", *Semitica* 34 (1984), 23; Starcky and Gawlikowski, *Palmyre*, 79-80; Will, *Palmyréniens*, 89.

In the present state of research, the archaeological sources do not provide a definitive answer to the question of whether Dura-Europos was located on the route of the Palmyrene caravans. Although inscriptions from Palmyra never mention Dura with respect to the caravan trade, this does not provide a decisive argument against its involvement because the inscriptions provide no information about the exact route taken by the caravans, and do not specify the means of transport or the goods that were imported or exported. Poidebard did not find a caravan track between Palmyra and Dura-Europos, but this does not exclude the possibility that Palmyrene caravans halted in Dura-Europos. In fact, Poidebard himself suggested that the Palmyrene caravans set off on the road towards Hit and left this trail at Giffa or Oumm aṣ-Selabîh, following the northern branch towards Dura. Admittedly, none of the archaeological materials from Dura-Europos testify to its involvement in the Palmyrene caravan trade. On the other hand, there is no material which testifies to the local commerce between the two cities either.

The Palmyrene material from Parthian Dura-Europos does not unequivocally point in one direction. The development of the Palmyrene community in Dura-

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[135] The two Mithraic reliefs dedicated by Palmyrene archers both date from the Roman period. The relief dedicated to Iarḥibol is without date, but there are no decisive arguments that favour a date before 165 CE.

[136] Poidebard, *Trace de Rome*, 105-114.

[137] Hit or Anath: Starcky and Gawlikowski, *Palmyre*, 80; Gawlikowski, "Palmyre et l'Euphrate", 61; Teixidor, "Port romain", 23. Phaliga-Circesium: Will, *Palmyréniens*, 89. The main piece of evidence that Anath played a role in the Palmyrene caravan trade in the period of Parthian domination is a Palmyrene inscription from the year 132 CE, mentioning a Nabatean cavalryman who served in Ḥirta (Hit) and the camp of Anath: *PAT* no. 0319. From this it may perhaps be inferred that a Palmyrene military post was stationed at Anath, charged with the protection of a river port. It is certain that Palmyrenes were stationed at Anath during the period when the Euphrates region was controlled by the Romans: *PAT* nos. 0200 (n.d.), and 2757 (225 CE). It is therefore possible that the Palmyrene caravans headed for Anath (but again, no road has been found to substantiate this hypothesis). Perhaps this was already the case in the Parthian period, concomitantly with the route to Dura-Europos. It is also possible that Anath replaced Dura-Europos in the Roman period, when the city gradually changed into a Roman fortress and lost its commercial importance.

Europos accords well with the rise and growth of the Palmyrene caravan trade, which may be a consequence of the location of Dura-Europos on the route of the Palmyrene caravans. However, it is equally possible that it was a side-effect of the caravan trade: a steady growth of local commerce caused by the rise and growth of Palmyra. The remains of an ancient road heading for Palmyra which was found outside the main gate of Dura could have served local commerce as well as the long-distance trade.[138] The same ambiguity surrounds the other evidence. The foundation of the extra-mural temple in 33 BCE by members of two clans that were involved in the Palmyrene caravan trade favours the view that Dura was a halting place for the caravans and the fact that the rebuilding of the temple of the Gaddê was financed by a family of high social standing in Palmyra also points in this direction. On the other hand, the location of the temples of Zeus-Kyrios and the Gaddê may be cited to favour the view that the Palmyrene community was engaged in the local commerce between the two cities, as it is difficult to understand why merchants would settle in the city unless they had a business in town. The location of the temple of the Gaddê near the bazaar favours the hypothesis that Palmyrene residents of Dura traded with the local population, a view supported by the clientele of the temple of Zeus Kyrios-Baalshamin, which probably consisted of both Palmyrenes and local inhabitants.

The options of regional versus long-distance trade are not mutually exclusive: given the location of Dura-Europos and its economic functioning in the region, we have to reckon with the possibility that both phenomena occurred. Dura's function as a halting-place for the Palmyrene caravans is consonant with its geographical location on the ancient military and trading route connecting the cities of northern Syria with Mesopotamia; it can be safely assumed that the Palmyrene caravans which headed for the East followed the Euphrates route as well. A new theory on the route taken by the caravans, recently advanced by Professor Michael Gawlikowski, favours the view that Dura was involved in Palmyra's commerce with Babylonia.[139] It has long been assumed that the caravans followed the riverbanks on their way to the south, but Gawlikowski convincingly points out that the Palmyrenes used boats to transport their goods. Economically, transport by water is much more profitable than by land, as boats are quicker and able to carry much larger cargoes than camels.[140] This implies that the Palmyrenes only made limited use of caravans in their trade with the East, transporting goods by camel only along the stretch to and from the Euphrates.

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[138] Above, note 28.

[139] Gawlikowski, "Palmyre et l'Euphrate", 53-68; idem, "La commerce de Palmyre sur terre et sur eau", *L'arabie et ses mers bordieres, I: Itinéraires et voisinages* (Séminaire de recherche 1985-1986 sous la direction de J. F. Salles; Travaux de la maison de l'Orient 16; Lyon 1988), 163-172.

Travelling through the desert was time-consuming, expensive and hazardous, and we may therefore assume that the merchants kept the route to and from the Euphrates as short as they possibly could. Professor Gawlikowski argues that the length of the track followed by the caravans depended upon the navigability of the Euphrates. On the upstream journey, i.e. from the Persian Gulf towards Palmyra, the river was only navigable to Hit. Here the Palmyrenes disembarked and the caravans followed their way back home through the desert by the approximately 500-kilometre-long track discovered by Poidebard. On the downstream journey the river did not pose any limitations and it is reasonable to suppose that the Palmyrene caravans chose the shortest road towards it. As already pointed out by Cumont, the shortest route from Palmyra towards the Euphrates abuts on Dura-Europos.[141] Gawlikowski's hypothesis therefore opens up the possibility that the Palmyrene caravans halted at Dura-Europos on their outward journey.[142]

The hypothesis that Dura was only visited on the journey from Palmyra to the Persian Gulf explains why we never encounter the city in Palmyrene inscriptions with respect to the caravan trade. With the exception of three instances, all inscriptions mention the journey of the caravans from cities in southern Babylonia back to Palmyra.[143] This imbalance in the epigraphic material may be due partly to the dangers posed by the track between Hit and Palmyra.[144] However, the most important reason is to be sought in the fact that these inscriptions commemorate successful undertakings which contributed to the prosperity of the city, and thus look at the venture from the perspective of the completed journey. The fact that the downstream journey is hardly ever mentioned in the inscriptions seems to indicate that this route did not pose many problems. The short distance between Palmyra and the Euphrates is not the full explanation, though, because this route is still over 200 kilometres long and the journey therefore remained a hazardous undertaking for a big and richly loaded caravan. Alternatively, we may suppose that the departing caravans had quite a different character. It is often taken for granted that the caravans which left for Babylonia were as big as those that returned, but there is no evidence to substantiate this hypothesis. Only two out of the three inscriptions that refer to the downstream journey explicitly refer to caravans; the third only mentions merchants. Given the silence of the sources it may just be possible that the departure of caravans for Babylonia was an exception to the rule.

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[140] R. Duncan-Jones, *The Economy of the Roman Empire. Quantitative Studies* (Cambridge, 1974), 66, estimates the price level of transport by sea, river and land in Egypt in the time of Diocletian as 1: 4: 9: 28/56. Thus transport over land was about six times more expensive than by river.

[141] The distance of about 220 kilometres that separates both cities could be covered by a courier in about two days. For the caravans, the crossing of the desert would take four days. Compared to the route towards Hit, this implies a saving of six days, which makes Dura-Europos into a likely halting place of Palmyrene caravans. In Cumont's time the track was still used by Bedouins: Cumont, *Fouilles*, XXXIX, note 1. At he beginning of the second millennium BCE Tadmor was a halting post on a route traversing the desert between the kingdom of Mari in the east and the kingdom of Qaṭna in the west: Joannès, "Palmyre et les routes du désert", 399-402. In addition, the oasis was frequented by Sutean clans who roamed the desert between Palmyra and the middle Euphrates: idem, *op. cit.*, 410, note 51. Hence the main roads connecting Palmyra with the middle Euphrates region during the Roman period Palmyra-Dura-Europos, Palmyra-Anath and Palmyra-Hit were already in use at the beginning of the second millennium BCE.

[142] Gawlikowski, "Commerce de Palmyre", 169. Anath is mentioned as another possibility.

[143] *PAT* nos. 1411 (156 CE); 1419 (150 CE); 0279 (247 CE). The last only mentions merchants.

[144] Some of the inscriptions state that the person honoured saved the caravans from possible dangers, sometimes specified as originating from nomadic groups roaming the desert: *PAT* nos. 1414 (138 CE); 0197 (132 CE). A bilingual honorific inscription from the temple of Allat dated

In fact, we do not even know what goods, if any, the Palmyrene caravans transported to the East. The only clue is provided by a passage in the *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea*, which names several products imported into northern India.[145] Since the Palmyrenes are known to have sailed to Scythia, they may have imported glass and silverware, multi-coloured textiles, coral, storax, frankincense, money and wine. Henry Seyrig, who analysed this passage in his discussion of one of the Palmyrene inscriptions that mention Scythia, suggested that the Palmyrenes bought some of these products on their way to India, in their trading centres in Southern Babylonia.[146] I propose to follow Seyrig's line of reasoning and suggest that the Palmyrene caravans set out with only a limited number of products from the West, buying the rest of their trading goods on their way South. One of the products imported into southern Babylonia, as well as India, for example, was wine. Grapes were cultivated in the region of Dura-Europos and by buying the wine in the region where it was grown the Palmyrenes could save themselves the expense and

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144 CE, mentions a certain Abdallat from Aḥyt who assembled a party in order to attack a caravan. It is not clear whether Aḥyt is the name of a tribe or the name of a village situated between Palmyra and the Euphrates. Hence it is not certain whether the text refers to an assault by nomadic groups: Drijvers, "Greek and Aramaic in Palmyrene Inscriptions", 34-38, pls. I and II.

[145] *Periplus Maris Erythraei*, par. 39. The most recent edition and translation of this anonymous work which can now be dated around the middle of the first century CE, is L. Casson, *The Periplus Maris Erythraei* (Princeton 1989). On the date of the manuscript and the origin of its author compare *op. cit.*, 6-10. Apart from this source, archaeological remains found in India testify to commercial relations with the west, cf. M. G. Raschke, "New Studies in Roman Commerce with the East", *ANRW* II, 9.2 (1978), 630-634. See also Raschke's methodical remarks on the use of archaeological material in this field of study, 676-677.

[146] H. Seyrig, "Inscriptions grecques de l'agora de Palmyre", *Syria* 22 (1941), 261-262.

dangers of a loaded journey through the desert.[147] The fact that the majority of the caravans which left Palmyra were of a modest size perhaps explains why the track between Palmyra and Dura-Europos has not yet been found.

If the Palmyrenes indeed chose the shortest road through the desert towards Dura and loaded their ships, it can be concluded that the camels that stayed behind could not be used on the journey back. Of course it is possible that they were transported downstream and awaited the cargo at Hit, but it would have been far more profitable to use them for the short-distance trade between Dura-Europos and Palmyra, especially since the region of Dura was stocked with agricultural products that had to be imported into Palmyra.[148] It can be gathered from the famous tariff of Palmyra, a document concerned with the local economy of Palmyra and its territory, that Palmyra was partly dependent upon the import of agricultural products.[149] Information on the food supply of Palmyra during the first century of the Common Era is provided by the pronouncement of Gaius Licinius Mucianus, *legatus pro praetore* of Syria in 67-69 CE, who is quoted as saying that loads of provisions carried to and from the villages of Palmyra were free of charge, whereas provisions imported and exported outside its boundaries were charged at one *denarius* per load.[150] This rule is clearly intended to protect and stimulate the local economy. However, the fact that the distinction is made shows that provisions were partly imported during this period. An amendment to this rule in the new law of the year 137 CE shows that imports were stimulated in the second century of the Common Era. Compared to the old tariff, the charge on provisions coming from outside the region of Palmyra is decreased by half.[151] This amendment may be seen to illustrate the deficiency of agricultural production in the region of Palmyra in the second century, a shortage undoubtedly caused by Palmyra's growing population.[152]

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[147] It is well known that wine was produced in Lebanon and Palestine and from there exported to Palmyra, cf. the inscription dated in 242-243 CE, published by H. Ingholt, "Un nouveau thiase à Palmyre", *Syria* 7 (1926), 128. Of course this does not imply that wine from these regions was exported by the Palmyrenes. If my hypothesis is correct, the Palmyrenes bought wine in Dura-Europos. This wine could be loaded onto a ship right away, which saved a lot of money.

[148] The solution that the camels awaited the cargo at Hit was proposed by Gawlikowski, "Commerce de Palmyre", 169, and idem, "The Roman Frontier on the Euphrates", *Mesopotamia* 22 (1987), 80, on the basis of a group of inscriptions dated 98 CE, found in the wadi Rijet Umm-Kubar, near the confluence of the wadi Hauran, 50 kilometres south-west of Hadita on the Euphrates.

[149] The law, by far the longest Palmyrene inscription known so far, was drawn up in Greek and Palmyrene by order of the council of Palmyra in 137 CE: *PAT* no. 0259. It offers a revision and amplification of an older tariff, part of which was published with the new law. I follow the chronological order first proposed by J. G. Février, *Essai sur l'histoire politique et économique de Palmyre* (Paris 1931), chapter IV. The inscription was first published in 1926, in both Greek and Palmyrene versions, by J.-B. Chabot in *CIS* II. no. 3913, with a Latin translation and commentary of the Palmyrene text. A French translation is offered by J. Teixidor, "Le tarif de Palmyre, I. Un commentaire de la version palmyrénienne", *Aula Orientalis* I. 2 (1983), 235-252, which is reprinted in the appendix of Teixidor's "Port Romain", 99-104. Matthews, "Tax Law", 174-178, offers an English translation of the Greek text, in which extensive use is made of the Palmyrene text. The literature on this interesting document is extensive. For further reading compare the studies referred to in the recent article by Matthews cited above.

[150] Greek: 187-191/ 194-113; Palmyrene: 109-113/ 118-123.

It follows from the proposed reconstruction of the caravan roads and the organization of Palmyrene long-distance trade that the Palmyrene caravans may well have halted in Dura-Europos on their way to Babylonia. However, Dura-Europos was more than a halting-place for the Palmyrene caravans: it was a market as well, where the Palmyrenes could buy local products intended for Palmyra as well as for Babylonia. Although this reconstruction is bound to remain hypothetical, it is clear that from the beginning of the first century CE Dura-Europos prospered in the wake of Palmyra. The favourable economic influence of the oasis upon the development of Dura-Europos, in all likelihood helped the reception of Palmyrene merchants who resided in the city during this period.

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[151] Greek: 89-91; Palmyrene: 59-60.

[152] Février, *Histoire*, 40-41, esp. note 1.

CHAPTER TWO

THE TEMPLE OF BEL IN THE NECROPOLIS OF DURA-EUROPOS

The formation of a Palmyrene religious identity

In 33 BCE two Palmyrenes founded a small sanctuary on the plateau outside the walls of the fortified city of Dura-Europos, where the necropolis of the city later developed.[1] This temple is our main source of information on the social and religious position of Palmyrenes in Dura before the second half of the second century CE. Most of the building has deteriorated owing to its unprotected location in the desert and three inscriptions and a fragmentary painting are the only items that have been found there. In spite of this small quantity of material, the temple provides a rich, and in many respects unique, source of information, enabling a fairly accurate reconstruction of the building history of the sanctuary, of its patrons and clientele, and of the development of its cult to be made. In addition, it provides important insights into the religious and economic situation in Palmyra before the Common Era, and, as we shall see below, reflects a certain religious development in Palmyra around the beginning of the Common Era.

The latest inscription from the sanctuary is dated 173 CE, but the temple was probably in use until the city was besieged by the Sasanians around the middle of the third century CE. By and large the history of the temple tallies with our information on the development of the Palmyrene community in the city. It may be inferred from the small dimensions of the original sanctuary that it served the needs of a small community. During the first two centuries of its existence, the sanctuary was not altered much, but it was doubled in size in the second half of the second century CE, an enlargement that coincided with the increase in the Palmyrene community in Dura-Europos in this period. The same development can be noticed within the city, in particular in the so-called 'temple of the Gaddê'.

The two Palmyrenes founded their temple outside the fortified city. We have no proof that by 33 BCE a Palmyrene community had settled within the city proper, but this is not surprising, for sources which pre-date the Common Era are extremely scarce in Dura-Europos. The oldest material that testifies to a Palmyrene sanctuary within Dura was found beneath the later temple of the Gaddê and probably has to be dated around 50 CE.[2] Unfortunately we know hardly anything about this temple: the most we can say is that, like the temple in the necropolis, it was small and served the needs of a small community. Another temple that is frequently ascribed to the Palmyrene community is the so-called 'temple of the Palmyrene gods' or 'temple of Bel', a sanctuary located against the city walls in the northern part of the town, but there is no proof that Palmyrenes belonged to the clientele of this temple in the Parthian period.[3] All materials that unequivocally testify to the cult of Palmyrene gods in this sanctuary date from the third century CE, when the northern part of the city had been changed into a Roman military camp.

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[1] Appendix, 210-212.

The evidence suggests that the temple in the necropolis was administered by Palmyrenes during the entire period of its existence. The individual who enlarged the sanctuary in 173 CE claims to descend from one of the founders of the temple known from 33 BCE.[4] Bel and Iarḫibol, the gods mentioned in inscriptions from the temple, are both typically Palmyrene gods, whose cult at Dura was confined to Palmyrenes. If the reading proposed for the badly damaged inscription from the year 173 CE is correct, Palmyrenes served as their priests, a clear indication for the Palmyrene character of this cult. We have no information on the clientele of the sanctuary, but the outspoken Palmyrene character of its tutelary deities, the extramural location of the shrine, its original dimensions and its growth over the centuries make it very probable that the sanctuary was mainly visited by Palmyrenes.

When the dedicatory inscription from 33 BCE was first published in 1935, it was the oldest dated Palmyrene inscription known at that time. Although since then slightly older inscriptions have come to light in Palmyra itself, it is still one of the very few Palmyrene inscriptions dated before the Common Era. Early sources from Palmyra are fragmentary and enigmatic and the inscription from Dura therefore provides valuable complementary information, particularly because we are well informed about its historical and archaeological context. Two features of the inscription are unique among Palmyrene inscriptions hitherto known: the fact that it is dedicated to both Bel and Iarḫibol, plus the fact that it is a joint dedication by members of two Palmyrene clans. These two features enable us to clarify the religious situation in Palmyra before the Common Era. Moreover, when compared with inscriptions dated in the Common Era, this inscription can be used to illustrate a religious development in Palmyra.

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[2] Appendix, 229-230.

[3] For the cult in this temple before the Roman period, see the appendix,299-300.

[4] Inscriptions no. 1 (33 BCE) and no. 3 (173 CE), discussed in the appendix.

Palmyrene religion before the Common Era

A unique feature of the dedication of the temple in the necropolis is that it is made by two individuals who belong to different Palmyrene clans.[5] In inscriptions from Palmyra it is extremely rare to encounter the name of more than one clan: thus far only one instance is known in which two clans explicitly acted together.[6] The event commemorated by this inscription, however, is political in nature; religious dedications that we know of are invariably made by members of the same clan.[7] It is possible to go one step further and to ascribe Palmyrene sanctuaries to particular clans or 'tribes'.

One of the dedicants of the temple in the necropolis identified himself as a member of the Bene Komare. It can be inferred from Palmyrene inscriptions that this clan was in charge of a sanctuary dedicated to Aglibol and Malakbel. However, the dedicant of the Durene temple did not consecrate the temple to his ancestral deities but to Bel and Iarḫibol. This is best explained by the fact that he founded the temple in conjunction with an individual from another clan, a joint undertaking which apparently prompted the dedicants to look beyond their ancestral religion for a common religious ground. Hence it can be inferred from the choice of these two dedicants that the cult of Bel and Iarḫibol was not confined to a particular social group and transcended the segmentary organization typical of Palmyrene society and religion.

The communal significance of Bel and Iarḫibol suggested by the dedicatory inscription from Dura is confirmed by evidence from Palmyra. In the Common Era Bel and Iarḫibol each possessed a temple in Palmyra, the cults of which touched upon Palmyra's entire population. Information on Palmyrene religion before the Common Era is scarce but substantiates the picture that emerges from Dura.

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[5] This led the excavators to assume that the religion of the Palmyrene community of Dura-Europos was organized along tribal lines: *TEAD* VII-VIII, 324, followed by J.-M. Dentzer, "Le sanctuaire syrien", *AHS* II, 318.

[6] Apart from the inscription cited in the following note, two examples are known. Both instances refer to marriages between people from different clans: *PAT* nos. 0168 (52 CE) and 2801 (52 CE). Compare also M. Gawlikowski, *Temple*, 46. The marriage between people from different clans was exceptional, for clans in Palmyra appear to have been endogamous.

[7] *PAT* no. 0261 (21 CE).

The temple of Bel before the Common Era

Most of the pertinent written material which pre-dates the Common Era was found underneath the present temple of Bel, and in all likelihood derives from the structures which preceded this sanctuary. It may be inferred from these sources that the tell, which was used as a platform for the temple of Bel in the Common Era, was previously used by a congregation of Palmyrene clans for the cult of their family gods headed by Bel.[8] An inscription commemorating the erection of a statue by the priests of Bel in 44 BCE shows that Bel was indeed worshipped in the early sanctuary.[9]

Bel is the traditional epithet of Marduk, the Lord of the Babylonian pantheon, which was at some time adopted for the god Bol, the original name of the supreme deity of the oasis.[10] This may be inferred from the names of the indigenous deities Iarḥibol and Aglibol, as well as from the great many Palmyrene personal names that contain the element 'Bol'.[11] We do not know whether, or to what degree, Bol retained his local character after he adopted the name of the Babylonian god Bel. It is unlikely that the Palmyrenes simply adopted a foreign god as their supreme deity: possibly Marduk-Bel had certain characteristics in common with the Palmyrene god Bol, which facilitated his assimilation. Be that as it may, it is certain that the influence of Babylon upon Palmyra's religion went beyond the mere adoption of a name and affected the cult of Bol/Bel as well.[12] When exactly Bol gave way to Bel is not clear: Bel was probably worshipped in Palmyra in the Seleucid era, but the shift may very well date back to the Achaemenid period, during which Mesopotamia had a strong impact upon Syrian culture and religion.[13]

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[8] Gawlikowski, *Temple*, 66; Teixidor, *Pantheon*, 3-4; H. J. W. Drijvers, *Ba^{c}al Shamîn de Heer van de hemel. Zijn plaats in het pantheon van Palmyra* (Assen 1971), 2-3 and 17.

[9] *PAT* no. 1524 (wrongly dated as 44 CE, instead of 44 BCE).

[10] Bol is in all probability a contracted form of Ba^{c}al and as such an indication for a West Semitic layer in Palmyra's religion: Gawlikowski, *Temple*, 63. It is noteworthy that in texts from Mari Ba^{c}al has already been contracted to Bal, as in Yamut-Bal or Emut-Bal, from which it is only a small step to Bol. On Marduk-Bel, see T. Abusch, "Marduk", *DDD*, cols. 1014-1026.

[11] Cf. Milik, *Dédicaces*, 36. The assertion of H. Seyrig, "Le culte de Bêl et de Baalshamîn", *Syria* 14 (1933), 240-241, that in the Common Era the Palmyrenes still remembered their ancient deity Bol since the element Bol frequently figures in Palmyrene personal names, has to be dismissed. However, Βωλος is possibly mentioned together with Isis and Aphrodite in a Greek inscription, bearing a date in 149 CE: Milik, *Dédicaces*, 54-55, pls. VI.1, 2 and VII. The reading 'Bol' is accepted by R. du Mesnil du Buisson, "Première campagne de fouilles à Palmyre", *CRAI* 1966, 177-178, although this reading is far from certain and provides little basis for a conclusion: *SEM* 1968, no. 26, and Teixidor, *Pantheon*, 58-59, propose the alternative reading Samabôl. Cf. also the cautious position of Starcky and Gawlikowski, *Palmyre*, 90.

[12] The Babylonian character of the god was recently underlined by S. Dalley, "Bel at Palmyra and Elsewhere in the Parthian Period", *ARAM* 7 (1995), 137-151. Cf. the discussion of the Palmyrene Akitu festival below, Chapter V, 146-147.

Bel was by no means the only deity venerated in the Hellenistic temple. It is for this reason that the Palmyrenes referred to this sanctuary as *bt ʾlhyʾ*, 'the house of the gods', an expression still used for the temple of Bel in the first century of the Common Era.[14] Besides Bel the inscriptions mention Iarḥibol;[15] Ḥerta, Nanaia and Reshef;[16] ,*ʾštrʾ* ('the goddess');[17] Bolᶜastor and *šdyʾ* ('the demons');[18] Belḥammon and Manawat;[19] *brt bl* ('the daughter of Bel');[20] and Baᶜaltak.[21] It is known that constructions dedicated to several of these deities were located on the tell. Inscriptions mention an 'enclosure' (*dwrʾ*) dedicated to Iarḥibol, and 'porticos' (*mṭltʾ*) dedicated to Bolᶜastor and the demons, Ḥerta, Nanaia and Reshef, and Iarḥibol.[22] In this respect the ancient temple of Bel reminds one of the great sanctuary at Hatra, where several shrines dedicated to different deities were likewise located in the court of the temple.[23]

An archaic relief from the Hellenistic temple of Bel, which pictures four gods, enables us to complement the list of deities venerated in the early temple with Heracles-Nergal and Aglibol.[24] From left to right are represented a naked bearded figure who is carrying a club and a lion skin; a goddess with a radiant nimbus wearing a long Greek dress; a god with a radiant nimbus and a lunar crescent on his head, who is carrying a palm branch; and a very similar deity with rays around his head. The iconography of the god with the club and the lion skin tallies with Heracles, whom the Palmyrenes identified with the Babylonian god Nergal. By analogy with representations from the Common Era, the other three gods may be identified as Astarte, Aglibol and Iarḥibol respectively.[25] The fact that Iarḥibol and Aglibol are clad in civilian dress and not in their habitual military costume does not preclude this identification, for this particular dress is due to the early date of the relief. As Henry Seyrig pointed out, Palmyrene gods were only depicted in military cuirass from the Common Era onwards, a change attributable to the effect of growing Arab influence in the oasis during this period.[26]

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[13] According to Polybius, V. 79, 8; 82, 12, a man by the name of Zabdibelos was in command of a group of 10, 000 Arabian archers in the army of Antiochus III during the battle of Raphia in 217 BCE. Zabdibelos ('gift of Bel'), contains the element Bel, which is a typical Palmyrene name in the CE: Stark, *Personal Names,* 17 and 85. Hence the name suggests that Bel was worshipped in the oasis in the Seleucid period. On the influence of Babylonia upon Syrian culture and religion in the Achaemenid period, see Drijvers, *Edessa,* 54-56. It can no longer be established whether Palmyrene religion was directly influenced by Babylon, or whether Babylonian concepts reached the city by way of Assyria.

[14] *PAT* no. 2774 (n.d.; cf. the restoration proposed by Gawlikowski, *Temple,* 56-57). For the inscriptions from the later period, see below, note 53.

[15] *PAT* nos. 2774 and 2775 (both n.d.). Possibly *PAT* no. 2768 (n.d.). Cf. the restoration proposed by Gawlikowski, *Temple*, 64.

[16] *PAT* no. 2766 (6 BCE). Cf. Gawlikowski, *Temple*, 61.

[17] *PAT* no. 1511 (n.d.).

[18] *PAT* no. 2780 (n.d.). *PAT* no. 2749 (48 CE), refers to the same god and the demons. Cf. Gawlikowski, *Temple*, 60 and 63-64.

[19] *PAT* nos. 1523 (n.d.) and 1471 (n.d.).

[20] *PAT* no. 2723 (24 BCE).

[21] *PAT* no. 2750 (n.d.). Cf. Gawlikowski, *Temple*, 33-34 (provenance from the temple of Bel is not certain).

[22] *PAT* nos. 2774 (n.d.); 2749 (48 CE); 2766 (6 BCE); 2768 (n.d.). Cf. Gawlikowski, *Temple*, 63-66.

[23] K. Dijkstra, *Life and Loyalty*, 175.

[24] Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra*, 12, pl. XIV.

Later sources show that many of these deities were affiliated with particular clans or families. It is highly unlikely that these alliances were introduced as late as the Common Era, and we can therefore assume that the deities who were venerated with Bel in the Hellenistic temple were the ancestral gods of different groups. This is supported by the communal character of the early temple. Honorary statues of members of different clans were set up in the sanctuary, and a fragmentary inscription from the ancient temple lists several individuals who are characterized as 'inhabitants of Tadmor' (*tdmryʾ*).[27] The identification of these people by their city instead of their clan suggests that they were members of a confederal organization, and as only the priests of Bel were organized in an inter-tribal thiasos in the Common era, the archaic inscription probably refers to this institution.[28] This assumption is supported by the contribution of this thiasos to 'the house of the gods' (*bt ʾ[lhyʾ]*), an expression denoting the temple of Bel at the beginning of the Common Era.[29] The fact that Bel's priests are characterized as inhabitants of Tadmor suggests that the cultic organization of this temple cut across the genealogical boundaries within the city.

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[25] Most decisive is a relief from the peristyle of the temple of Bel, dated around 80 CE, which represents Iarḥibol, Aglibol and Astarte (fig. 17). Cf. the discussion of this relief below, Chapter III, 71. The archaic relief suggests that Iarḥibol already was a sun god before the rebuilding of the temple of Bel around the beginning of the Common Era. Contra Teixidor, *Pantheon*, 34; idem, "Cultes tribaux", 284-286, who suggests that Iarḥibol's solar character is contemporary with the construction of the new temple. This is based on the assumption that the priests of Bel introduced a new theology when the temple of Bel was built, a hypothesis that is hard to substantiate with the available evidence. Cf. below, 58-59, for the impossibility of describing the development of the religious organization of the temple of Bel from a theological perspective.

[26] H. Seyrig, "Les dieux armés et les Arabes en Syrie", *Syria* 47 (1970), 83-92.

[27] Gawlikowski, *Temple*, 66. Three fragmentary inscriptions, *PAT* nos. 2774-2775 and 1521 (cf. Milik, *Dédicaces*, 308), originally formed one inscription: Gawlikowski, *Temple*, 58. The hypothesis of Milik, *Dédicaces*, 289-290, that a fourth fragment - *PAT* no. 2767 - also belongs to this inscription, was rightly dismissed by Gawlikowski, "Tadmoréen", 97, on the grounds that this fragment was not found in 'foundation T', but in the so-called *monument à niches*.

[28] Milik, *Dédicaces*, 309. Contra Teixidor, "Cultes tribaux", 285, and idem, "Port romain", 9, who states that Bel was the ancestral deity of the Bene Kohennabu. Teixidor's statement is based upon a hypothesis of Milik, *Dédicaces*, 31 and 55, who interprets the name *Khnbw* as a derivation of *kohâne Bol*, 'priests of Bol', instead of the far more obvious reading *Kahin Nabu*, 'priest of Nabu' proposed by J. Starcky, the editor of *Inv.* XI, no. 100. Compare the criticism of Gawlikowski, *Temple*, 35-36, with respect to Milik's interpretation. On the 'inter-tribal' character of the priests of Bel in the Common Era, see Milik, *Dédicaces*, 109-110.

One of the deities associated with Bel in the early sanctuary is Iarḫibol. It may be inferred from the fragmentary inscription referred to above that this god was intimately connected with Bel and his priests. The members of the inter-tribal thiasos are not only remembered for their contribution to 'the house of the gods'; they are also honoured for their donation to the 'enclosure' (*dwrʾ*) of Iarḫibol.[30] Moreover, a member of this thiasos swears by the god Iarḫibol. The special relationship between the priests of Bel and the god Iarḫibol is confirmed by the later sources. In 117 CE the symposiarch of the priests of Bel received a testimony of this god.[31] The archaic inscription from the temple of Bel in Palmyra thus provides a remarkable parallel to the dedicatory inscription of the temple in the necropolis of Dura-Europos: both testify to a joint veneration of Bel and Iarḫibol by various family groups.

The cult of Iarḫibol at the Efqa

In all likelihood Iarḫibol's eminent position in the early temple of Bel results from the prominence of his individual sanctuary, located at the source called the Efqa. Palmyrene inscriptions refer to the deity venerated here as the 'Gad of the blessed source' or the 'sacred stone of the source'.[32] A relief dedicated by Palmyrene archers in Dura-Europos to 'Iarḫibol, the sacred stone of the blessed source', enables us to identify the god of the Efqa as Iarḫibol.[33] All information on Iarḫibol's cult at the Efqa is provided by epigraphic sources, none of which can be dated before the middle of the second century CE.[34] Nonetheless, the source is often considered one of the oldest places of worship in the oasis.[35] Given the vital importance of water for human life in the desert this is very probable, but unfortunately there is no firm proof that a sanctuary dedicated to Iarḫibol was located here in the early period. However, the location of Palmyra in the Hellenistic period and the orientation of the new temple of Bel do suggest that the source was a place of worship. The Hellenistic settlement was situated between the temple of Bel and the Efqa; apparently this was still the case when the temple of Bel was constructed at the beginning of the Common Era, for the entrance of the new temple faces the source instead of the Great Colonnade and the monumental city centre that were created around the middle of the second century CE.[36]

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[29] Below, note 53.

[30] The present inscription provides the only instance of this word at Palmyra. It is probably used here to mean 'enclosed space': *DNWSI*, 243. It can no longer be established whether this structure was situated on the tell or elsewhere in the oasis, for example near the Efqa. In view of the antiquity of the cult at the Efqa, the latter possibility is most likely. The identification by Milik, *Dédicaces*, 369-370, of the foundations of a circular structure found below the court of the temple of Bel as the remains of this structure, is false.

[31] *PAT* no. 0265 (117 CE).

[32] 'Sacred stone of the source': *PAT* nos. 0410 and 0411 (both n.d.) The 'sacred stone of the source' possessed its own priests, bearing the title *ʾpklʾ*, 'aphkalla'. For this priestly title see Gawlikowski, *Temple*, 112. 'Gad of the blessed source': *PAT* no. 0322 (n.d.). The 'Gad of the source' is anonymous, but the identification of this god as Iarḫibol is accepted by most scholars.

[33] Appendix, inscription no. 16.

Iarḫibol is one of the oldest Palmyrene deities. His name contains the element 'Bol', the traditional name of Palmyra's supreme deity, so we may assume that the cult of Iarḫibol antedates the Babylonian name Bel, which was adopted for Bol at the beginning of the Seleucid era at the latest. The antiquity of Iarḫibol fits well with the great age of the cult at the source, postulated above. Iarḫibol's relationship with the source is confirmed by the etymology of his name, the first element of which probably derives from the word *yarḫu*, 'pool, source of water', attested in Assyrian texts: thus Iarḫibol literally means 'lord of the Source'.[37] In all likelihood therefore, he was the god of the source around which the oasis developed.

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[34] On the cult of Iarḫibol at the source, see Gawlikowski, "Dieux de Palmyre", 2616-2617. All that is known about the appearance of this sanctuary is that it consisted of an enclosure and a pool: *PAT* no. 1919 (205 CE). Cf. Gawlikowski, *Temple*, 115-116. This suggests that it was an open sanctuary, without a *naos*.

[35] Not surprisingly, the oldest remains that testify to human presence were found near the source: Du Mesnil du Buisson, "Première campagne de fouilles", 160-162.

[36] For Hellenistic Palmyra, see Van Berchem, "Plan de Palmyre", 169-170. For the temple of Bel in the Common Era, see H. Seyrig, R. Amy, E. Will, *Le temple de Bêl à Palmyre,* 2 vols. (BAH 83; Paris 1975); R. du Mesnil du Buisson, "Le bas-relief du combat de Bêl contre Tiamat dans le temple de Bêl à Palmyre", *AAAS* 26 (1976), 91 (but I cannot agree with his suggestion that an Akitu house was located near the source).

[37] *CAD* i/j 325: *jarḫu*, 'water hole, pond'. Cf. Dalley, "Bel at Palmyra and Elsewhere", 145; H. J. W. Drijvers, "Inscriptions from Allât's Sanctuary at Palmyra", *ARAM* 7 (1995), 117, note 28. Previously, most scholars explained Iarḫibol's name by means of Aramaic *yrḥ,* the '(new) moon', i.e. 'moon of Bol'; Gawlikowski, "Dieux de Palmyre," 2616, with references. This meaning of the god's name stands in marked contrast with his solar character in Palmyrene sources. It is, of course, possible that Iarḫibol was originally a moon god and adopted a solar character at a certain point in history. However, the god Aglibol was in all likelihood the indigenous moon god of the oasis, and it is not reasonable to suppose there were two lunar deities. Alternatively, O. Eissfeldt, *Tempel und Kulte syrischer Städte in hellenistisch-römischer Zeit* (AO 40; Leipzig 1941), 85, suggests that the name derives from *yrḥ,* 'going', and hence means 'messenger of Bol'. Cf. the name Malakbel (below, Chapter VI, note 6). Eissfeldt's hypothesis is accepted by R. Dussaud, *La pénétration des arabes en Syrie avant l'islam* (BAH 59; Paris 1955), 95.

Iarḫibol of the source emerges from the inscriptions as a deity involved with the community as a whole, a function that probably results from the vital importance of the Efqa for Palmyra. As the divine supervisor of the source the god played an important role in the irrigation of the oasis, and as the water of the Efqa was of vital importance for all the inhabitants of Palmyra, this probably explains why Iarḫibol's cult touched upon other public issues as well.[38] The god testifies to the benefactions bestowed upon the city by high civil servants.[39] Most acknowledgements concern *stratègoi*, high municipal officers; the only other official known to have received a testimony from the god is a symposiarch of the priests of Bel, a plain indication for the civic importance of Bel's high priest.[40] Iarḫibol's authority even extended beyond Palmyra proper; an inscription dating from the end of the second century CE relates that Iarḫibol authorized the god Abgal to rule eternally over the sanctuary at Khirbet Semrin in the Palmyrène.[41]

In view of the communal character of the cult of Iarḫibol at the source it is not likely that his temple belonged to only one particular clan. Being the tutelary deity of the Efqa, Iarḫibol probably enjoyed the respect of the entire Palmyrene population. In any case, the Palmyrene evidence does not allow us to connect a particular clan or 'tribe' with his sanctuary. However, the Palmyrene archers who dedicated a relief to Iarḫibol in Dura-Europos explicitly identify themselves as members of the Bene Mita.[42] Javier Teixidor concludes from this inscription that the Bene Mita were in charge of the sanctuary at the Efqa, but inscriptions from Palmyra affiliate this 'tribe' with the cult of Bolᶜastor and the temple of Atargatis instead of Iarḫibol's sanctuary at the source.[43] The inscription from Dura-Europos therefore may be cited as evidence to the contrary: in Dura the Bene Mita preferred Iarḫibol to their ancestral gods, which points towards the communal character of his cult.[44] In this respect their choice resembles the dedication of the temple in the necropolis in 33 BCE, in which members of the Bene Komare and the Bene Gaddibol prefer Bel and Iarḫibol to their family gods.

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[38] *PAT* nos. 1917 and 1918 (both 162 CE); 1919 (205 CE); 1557 (206 CE). Iarḫibol of the source has frequently been characterized as an oracular deity: Dittenberger, *OGIS* 634. This is inferred from the word *ᵓḥd* (Greek αἱρέομαι) in *PAT* nos. 1919 (205 CE) and 1557 (206 CE): *brbnwt ᶜynᵓ dy ᵓḥd yrḥbwl ᵓlhᵓ*.... In their comment upon *PAT* no. 1557, A. Bounni and J. Teixidor, *Inv.* XII, 40-41, no. 44, favour the sense 'to take, to seize, to take possession of', and hence typify Iarḫibol as an oracular god. Cf. also Seyrig, "Bêl de Palmyre", 92. However, the sense 'to seize' seems unnecessary in view of the use of *ᵓḥd* for 'elect for a charge, to be chosen' evident from other passages: 'ᵓḥd', *PAT*, 336, and 'ᵓḥz', *DNWSI*, 35-38. The fact that the god appointed his own priests, does not of course imply that his cult was of an outspoken oracular nature. Consequently Iarḫibol's oracular character is dubious.

[39] H. Seyrig, "Inscriptions grecques", 246-248, no. 15 (192-193 CE); *PAT* no. 1398 (193 CE); H. Ingholt, "Deux inscriptions bilingues de Palmyre", *Syria* 13 (1932), 278 - 287, no. 1 (198 CE; Greek), and *PAT* no. 1063 (Palmyrene); *PAT* no. 0278 (242-243 CE); *Inv.* X, no. 115 (n.d.) The deity in the last inscription is anonymous. However, the identification as Iarḫibol is fairly certain, for the formulation of this inscription exactly matches the other texts.

[40] *PAT* no. 0265 (117 CE).

[41] *PAT* no. 1666 (n.d.). The identification of Abgal as a deity was first proposed by Gawlikowski, *Temple*, 114-115. Iarḫibol also functioned as the protective deity of Arak, an oasis on the route to Soura, situated about 28 kilometres to the north-west of Palmyra: *PAT* no. 1622 (209 CE).

[42] Appendix, inscription no. 16.

As early as the first century BCE Bel and Iarḫibol were the tutelary deities of two important Palmyrene sanctuaries that transcended the genealogical divisions of the city and touched upon the community as a whole. The religious organization in Palmyra thus readily explains why the dedicants of the temple in Dura-Europos preferred Bel and Iarḫibol to their ancestral gods. Their sanctuary was not confined to one specific group, but was open to all Palmyrenes who happened to visit Dura-Europos. The Palmyrene founders of the temple in the necropolis were in all likelihood merchants, who presumably acted together because they were involved in commercial activities: in Palmyra the long-distance trade cut across the genealogical boundaries and thus was a major incentive for the political unification of the clans.

Merchants live in close contact with their city of origin: consequently it is to be expected that their religious preferences will tally with the religious situation in their home town. The initial choice of the two dedicants in Dura in favour of the cult of Bel and Iarḫibol is readily explained by the communal cults of these two gods in Palmyra before the Common Era. If the temple in the necropolis was indeed visited by merchants, it is to be expected that the religious development of this temple followed religious innovations in Palmyra. It is to this development that we shall now turn our attention.

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[43] Teixidor, "Cultes tribaux", 285-286. An inscription from the temple of Bel dated in 48 CE honours two members of the Bene Mita for their contribution to a portico dedicated to 'Bolᶜastor [and the demons]': *PAT* no. 2749. This text points to a close relationship between Bolᶜastor and the Bene Mita. Teixidor, ***Pantheon***, 8, explains the name Bolᶜastor as a cultic formula designating the union between Bol and his spouse, which subsequently became an object of a separate cult. Gawlikowski, "Dieux de Palmyre", 2624, admits that Astor and Astarte might correspond to the ancient situation in Palmyrene religion. If this hypothesis is correct, the association of the Bene Mita with Bolᶜastor and Atargatis may be cited in favour of the equation Astarte-Atargatis, proposed below, Chapter III, 75. The affiliation of the Bene Mita with the sanctuary of Atargatis may be inferred from *PAT* no. 0273 (140 CE), in which the senate honours a certain Ahofali, a member of the Bene Mita, for his 'pious works' (*[m]ḥr[m]n*) for Malakbel, Gad Taimi and Atargatis, 'the good' (*ṭbyʾ*) or 'ancestral' (πατρῴοις) gods. For the Greek and Palmyrene text of this complicated inscription, a translation and references to previous commentaries, see Teixidor, ***Pantheon***, 89-90. For the genealogy of Ahofali see Milik, ***Dédicaces***, 72-73. The fact that the contribution is made by a member of the Bene Mita suggests that they were in charge of the temple of Atargatis. On the prominent role of members of this 'tribe' in Palmyra, compare the commentary upon inscription no. 16 in the appendix.

[44] The choice of the archers of the Bene Mita is in line with the preference of Palmyrene military for Iarḫibol.

The cult of Bel in the Common Era:
Bel, Iarḫibol and Aglibol and the new temple of Bel in Palmyra

Although the temple in the necropolis initially was dedicated to Bel and Iarḫibol, inscriptions dated in the Common Era mention Bel as the only deity worshipped in this sanctuary. This points towards a shift in its cultic organization, a change that stands in marked contrast to the continuity in the temple's administration. After all, we know that a descendant of one of the founders of the temple was responsible for the expansion of the sanctuary in the second half of the second century CE.[45] Although Iarḫibol was no longer attested in the temple in the necropolis, he was still a popular deity within the Palmyrene community of Dura in the Common Era.[46] Several monuments from Dura associate Iarḫibol with Bel, although they invariably add Aglibol and other Palmyrene deities to this couple.[47] In this respect the material from Dura tallies with the religious preferences of other Palmyrene expatriates.

The dedicatory inscription of the temple in the necropolis of Dura provides the only instance of Bel being associated with Iarḫibol alone, which is apparently due to the inscription's date in 33 BCE. All instances dated in the Common Era mention Bel alone or associate him with both Iarḫibol and Aglibol. Instances range from Dura to Rome, and this suggests that we are dealing with a development that goes back to a common prototype. The first inscription that testifies to Bel's association with Iarḫibol and Aglibol concerns the inauguration of the cult niche of the new temple of Bel, the imposing ruins of which still dominate the city of Palmyra:[48]

byrḥ tšry šnt 357.
ṣlmʾ dnh dy lšmš br tybwl
br škybl dy mn bny kmrʾ dy
ḥnk hyklʾ dy bl wyrḥbwl
wʿglbwl ʾlhyʾ bqdšwhy

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[45] Appendix, inscription no. 3.

[46] For an enumeration and discussion of instances testifying to Iarḫibol's cult in the Roman period, see below, Chapter VI, 186-187.

[47] For an analysis of these formations of deities, see Chapter III, below.

[48] *PAT* no. 1347 (wrongly dated in 32 CE).

> *ywm štt᾿ bnysn šnt 343*
> *dy ᾿qymw lh bnwhy lyqrh*
>
> In the month Tishri of the year 357 (October 45 CE). This statue (is) of Lishamsh the son of Taibbol, the son of Shokaibel, of the Bene Komare, who dedicated the shrine of Bel, Iarḥibol and Aglibol, the gods, during their festival,[49] (on) the sixth day of Nisan of the year 343 (April 32 CE), which (i.e. the statue) his sons erected for him in his honour.

Both the scale, ground plan and decoration of the temple of Bel are unparalleled in the oasis (fig. 14): obviously this is the most important temple in Palmyra. The present inscription in all likelihood recalls the consecration of its northern *thalamos*, the original and most important cult niche of the cella, the construction of which can be dated back to 19 CE.[50] Until recently it was thought to refer to the entire cella, and hence it was generally assumed that this impressive building was constructed within the extremely short period of about fifteen years.[51] In a recently published study Pietrzykowski convincingly points out that the present cella is actually the result of three successive stages of construction which covered about a century.[52] Over this period of time the initial ground plan of the cella was altered.

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[49] The translation of *bqdšwhy*, 'during their festival', was proposed by Gawlikowski, *Temple*, 68.

[50] *PAT* no. 0270 (cf. below, 64).

[51] Departing from the assumption that the inscription commemorates the consecration of the entire cella, K. S. Freyberger, *Die frühkaiserzeitlichen Heiligtümer der Karawanenstationen im hellenistischen Osten. Zeugnisse eines kulturellen Konflikts im Spannungsfeld zweier politischer Formationen* (DF 6; Mainz am Rhein 1998), 74-77, recently proposed to date the construction of the cella between the last quarter of the first century BCE and 32 CE. Freyberger advances two arguments to substantiate his hypothesis, neither of which I find convincing. First, he argues that the style of the sculptured decoration of the cella points to a date before the Common Era. However, as he himself admits, *op. cit.*, 4-5, the style of monuments dated between the last quarter of the first century BCE and the first half of the first century CE, does not allow of precise dating. Second, he argues that *PAT* no. 0263, an inscription found in the *temenos* of the temple of Bel which commemorates the donation of 'the gate and its doors and a chapel (*ḥmn᾿*) at Vologesias', ought to be dated 8 CE instead of 108 CE. Freyberger assumes that the gate and the doors refer to the gate of Bel's cella, and concludes that the building was under construction in 8 CE. However, there is no conclusive evidence that the inscription ought to be dated a century earlier. J. Cantineau, *Inv.* IX, 27, notes that its writing is in perfect accord with the date 108 CE. Freyberger did not see the study by M. Pietrykowski cited in note 52 below.

[52] M. Pietrzykowski, *Adyta Swiqtyn Palmyrenskich* (with a French summary by M. Gawlikowski: 'Les adytons des temples palmyréniens. Forme et fonction') (Warsaw 1997), 125-135. Before Pietrzykowski, H. J. W. Drijvers, "Aramaic ḤMN᾿ and Hebrew ḤMN: Their Meaning and Root", *JSS* 33 (1988), 168, note 11, argued on the basis of *PAT* no. 0263 (cf. above, note 51), that the peristyle of the cella (and the reliefs on its crossbeams) was constructed around 100 CE.

The *thalamos* that was consecrated in 32 CE was meant to be part of a cella of the conventional Greek type, with an entrance on the southern side. Initially this cella did not replace the cult buildings consecrated to other deities, which had traditionally been located near the main temple. This explains why Palmyrenes in inscriptions bearing dates from the first half of the first century CE still refer to the new complex as 'the house of their gods'.[53] About twenty years later, around 50 CE, the original ground plan of the temple changed radically. By then a second *thalamos* was being constructed on the southern side of the cella; consequently a new entrance had to be created, which was placed asymmetrically in the long western wall of the temple. During this period the original court of the temple was enlarged substantially. Around 80 CE, in the third and final stage of its construction, the building was placed on a large podium and surrounded by a peristyle. As the cella developed, the cult buildings dedicated to other deities gradually disappeared, until eventually the cella became the only cult building within a temple court of monumental dimensions. This is illustrated by inscriptions from the later period, which no longer refer to the temple as the *bt ᵓlhyhwn,* 'house of their gods', but use the denomination *bt bl,* 'house of Bel', instead.[54]

It is clear that Bel, Iarḥibol and Aglibol were the main deities of the building that was consecrated in 32 CE. The inscription which first associates the three gods recalls the consecration of the northern *thalamos*, the niche that housed the cult images of the principal deities of the sanctuary.[55] At the time of its inauguration it was the only cult niche of the sanctuary, and hence the focal point of its cult. The inscription alludes to a festival of the three gods, which suggests they were closely connected in the cult of the temple.[56] Bel is clearly the most important of the three - the inscription commemorating the consecration of the northern *thalamos*, for instance, mentions him first. Moreover, whereas the *haikla* is consecrated to Bel,

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[53] *PAT* nos. 1353 (35 CE); 0269 (51 CE). A similar expression, *bnyny [ᵓ]l[hyᵓ]*, 'the constructions of the gods', can perhaps be restored in J. Cantineau, "Tadmorea", *Syria* 14 (1933), 175-177, no. 2b (74 CE; this inscription is missing in *PAT*). Cf. the discussion of Gawlikowski, *Temple*, 71-72.

[54] *PAT* no. 2769 (171 CE; Greek equivalent ἱερὸν τοῦ βήλου); *PAT* no. 0260 (175 CE; Greek equivalent βασιλικὴ τοῦ βήλου); *PAT* no. 1370 (218 CE).

[55] The designation *thalamos* was first introduced by H. Seyrig, "Nouveaux monuments palmyréniens des cultes de Bêl et de Baalshamîn", *Syria* 14 (1933), 253, and is based upon the description of the cult niche of the temple of the Syrian goddess in Hierapolis, *De Dea Syria*, par. 31: "In the interior, the temple is not a single unit, for another chamber (θάλαμος) has been made in it. The entry ramp to it is short. It is not furnished with doors, but on the front it is completely open. All enter the large part of the temple, but into the chamber only priests go.....In this (chamber) are set statues of gods." *The Syrian Goddess (De Dea Syria). Attributed to Lucian* (ed. H. W. Attridge and R. A. Oden; Missoula 1976), pars. 31, and 42-43.

[56] Above, note 49.

Iarḫibol and Aglibol, inscriptions referring to the construction of the new *thalamos* speak of the *haikla* or the *naos* of Bel, a prominence which is confirmed by later inscriptions that refer to the entire complex as the temple of Bel.[57]

Moreover, whereas the cult of the new *thalamos* centred upon Bel, Iarḫibol and Aglibol, only Bel is mentioned in inscriptions commemorating its construction. This discrepancy between the cultic organization and the denomination of the temple is explained by the role of Iarḫibol and Aglibol in Bel's cult. The two gods are best characterized as attendants of Bel, associated with him in order to exemplify his supremacy.[58] In their capacity as the sun and the moon respectively, Iarḫibol flanks Bel to the right whereas Aglibol accompanies Bel to his left, exemplifying Bel's dominance over these luminary bodies and thereby alluding to his cosmic supremacy. From an iconographical point of view Iarḫibol and Aglibol serve as Bel's most characteristic 'attributes'; the iconography of Bel himself is very indistinct. Like other important Palmyrene deities Bel is pictured as a young and beardless god, clad in military costume. His only characteristic attribute is the *polos* adorning his head, but even this is not an intrinsic feature, so it is mainly through of the occurence of his two associates that Bel can be identified as such.[59]

The role of Iarḫibol and Aglibol in the cult of Bel is confirmed by the reliefs which decorate the ceiling and the lintel of the northern *thalamos*. Both are an integral part of the architecture of the cult niche and were especially designed for the *haikla* which was consecrated to the three gods in 32 CE.[60] The symbolism of the lintel and the ceiling is the same; both are illustrations of Bel's cosmic supremacy.[61] The lintel pictures an eagle with outstretched wings on a starry heaven, holding a snake in its claws and surrounded by six spheres. (fig. 15).[62] To the left of the eagle stands a god wearing military costume. From the radiant nimbus around his head it follows that he personifies the sun. The left-hand side of the relief is lost, but by analogy with similar representations from Palmyra, we can assume that a lunar deity was depicted to the right of the eagle. The eagle itself is the attribute of Zeus and as such it refers to Bel, the tutelary deity of the sanctuary, while the sun and the moon on either side of it illustrate Bel's dominance over these luminary bodies. Exactly the same idea is expressed by Bel's association with the sun god Iarḥibol and the moon god Aglibol. Thus the lintel may be interpreted as a symbolic representation of the three tutelary deities of the *thalamos*.[63]

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[57] *h[y]klʾ dy bl: PAT* no. 1352 (24 CE). Ναός Βήλου: *PAT* no. 0270 (19 CE; probably rendered in the Palmyrene text as *bt bl*, 'house of Bel'). *Haikla* derives from Sumerian *é-gal*, 'great house', i.e. palace or temple. From the late Assyrian period onwards it was also commonly used to mean a temple: Dalley, "Bel at Palmyra and Elsewhere", 140. The Babylonian origin of the word cannot be used to substantiate the Babylonian origin of Bel, as Dalley, *op. cit.*, suggests. The same Aramaic word is used to denote shrines of deities that did not originate in Mesopotamia, for example the sanctuary of Baalshamin in *PAT* no. 3959 (131 CE), and the temple of Jerusalem in the Aramaic chapters of Ezra. Cf. also Hebrew *hêkal*, 'palace, temple'. For the name 'temple of Bel', see above, note 54.

[58] Seyrig, "Bêl de Palmyre", 88.

[59] E. Will, "Bel", *LIMC* II.1, (1986), 90-92.

[60] It follows from the building history of the temple that these are the only reliefs that predate the consecration of the northern *thalamos* in 32 CE. Contrary to prevailing opinion, the other architectural reliefs from the temple of Bel should be dated later, around 80 CE (cf. above, note 52)

[61] As was already remarked by Seyrig, "Nouveaux monuments palmyréniens", 260. Seyrig is followed by all subsequent authors.

[62] Seyrig, *Temple de Bêl*, 83, pl. 27, Album 58.

Astral symbols likewise govern the representation on the ceiling of the northern *thalamos* (fig. 15).[64] In the centre of the dome-shaped ceiling there is a bust of a male figure personifying the planet Jupiter. He is surrounded by the personifications of six celestial bodies: the sun, the moon, Saturn, Mercury, Mars and Venus. These busts are enclosed by a ring depicting the twelve signs of the zodiac; the whole is supported in the corners by four eagles with outstretched wings. This representation of the firmament does not match any existing astrological configuration and is to be interpreted symbolically. Both the Babylonian god Marduk and the Greek god Zeus were connected with the planet Jupiter, and as the Palmyrene god Bel is related to both, we may assume that this planet represents the main deity of the temple.[65] Bel's attendants Iarḥibol and Aglibol are personified by the sun and the moon respectively, which are among the six heavenly bodies surrounding Jupiter/ Bel. Contrary to Greek convention, the moon is pictured as a male deity, from which it may be inferred that the moon is modelled on the Palmyrene god Aglibol, the only moon god attested in Palmyra.[66] Since Aglibol is usually associated with Iarḥibol in the cult of Bel, the personification of the sun is very likely to represent this deity.[67] Thus, like the lintel, the ceiling pictures Bel as a supreme deity, ruling the heavenly bodies. The decoration of the northern *thalamos* leaves no doubt about the supremacy of the tutelary deity of this temple and is entirely in keeping with the designation '*naos* of Bel'.

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[63] Seyrig, "Nouveaux monuments palmyréniens", 255, fig. 2, was the first to interpret the lintel as a representation of the so-called triad of Bel. His interpretation is accepted by all subsequent authors, with the exception of M. Gawlikowski, "Aus dem syrischen Götterhimmel. Zur Ikonographie palmyrenischen Götter", *1./2. Trierer Winckelmannsprogramm 1979/80* (Mainz am Rhein), 23, and idem,"Dieux de Palmyre", 2613. Gawlikowski argues that the position of the sun to the left and of the moon to the right of the eagle, deviates from the conventional position of Iarḥibol and Aglibol with respect to Bel. He notes that a similar composition frequently embellishes the fronton of Syrian temples in this period. Elsewhere, the representation is not related to the cult; Gawlikowski therefore assumes that this is not the case in the temple of Bel either. The deviant position of the sun and the moon on the lintel is indeed remarkable, and for this reason it is unlikely that we are dealing with a representation of the three gods. On the other hand it is significant that the lintel is part of the decoration of a cult niche, and not of a temple fronton. Moreover, this cult niche was consecrated to Bel, Iarḥibol and Aglibol, gods who are frequently pictured in a very similar way. Consequently it is hardly conceivable that the symbolism of the relief is unrelated to the cult of these three gods. The most obvious explanation is that we are not dealing with a straightforward representation but with a symbolic picture of these three deities.

[64] The relief has long been known. A revised drawing of this heavily weathered relief was first published in Seyrig, *Temple de Bêl*, Album 58-59, pl. 27.

[65] Abusch, "Marduk", col. 1016; T. Barton, *Ancient Astrology* (London-New York 1994), 111-112; The identification of Bel with Jupiter is still attested by Syrian authors. Cf. the examples listed by Drijvers, *Edessa*, 74-75.

Both the composition and the meaning of the formation comprising Bel, Iarḥibol, and Aglibol, are inextricably bound up with the cult in the temple of Bel. When not connected with Bel, Iarḥibol and Aglibol hardly ever appear as a pair:[68] as a couple they are typical of the cult in the temple of Bel and help to characterize the god its tutelary deity.[69] For this reason the group is justly termed 'the triad of Bel'.[70] The absence of Aglibol from the dedicatory inscription of 33 BCE in the temple in the necropolis of Dura-Europos suggests that before the Common Era this god was not yet associated with Bel and Iarḥibol. Apparently, therefore, the triad of Bel was especially created for the new temple of Bel.[71]

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[66] According to Seyrig, "Nouveaux monuments palmyréniens", 259, fig. 5; idem, *Temple de Bêl*, 83; M. A. R. Colledge, *The Art of Palmyra* (London 1976), 38-39, fig. 18; idem, "Le temple de Bêl. Qui l'a fait, et pourquoi?", *Palmyre. Bilan et perspectives* (ed. E. Frézouls; Strasbourg 1976), 49, the personification of the moon is female. The Palmyrene moon god Aglibol is male, and consequently both authors assume that this personification is inspired by the Greek goddess Selene. Consequently they advocate a Hellenistic-Roman origin for the iconography of the ceiling. However, both Seyrig's and Colledge's identifications are based upon an outdated drawing of the ceiling. On the revised drawing which was first published in the final publication of the temple of Bel, the personification of the moon definitely displays a male hairstyle. Seyrig has no comments upon this revised drawing, since the volume reproduces his posthumous paper which was published in *Syria* 48 (1971), 85-114. The male sex of the personification of the moon was first pointed out by Du Mesnil du Buisson, *TMP*, 50. Cf. Gawlikowski, "Syrischen Götterhimmel", 23; idem, "Dieux de Palmyre", 2611-2613.

[67] By analogy with the identification of the personifications of the sun and the moon as Iarḥibol and Aglibol, Gawlikowski, "Syrischen Götterhimmel", 23; idem, "Dieux de Palmyre", 2613 and 2623-2625, proposes to identify the four remaining planetary busts as local deities. For a refutation of this hypothesis and an alternative interpretation, see below, Chapter III, 69-74.

[68] *RTP* nos 244-245, provide the only exceptions to this rule.

[69] Seven other instances which associate the three gods have been found in Palmyra: an inscription found in the temple of Bel: *PAT* no. 1499 (n.d.); five tesserae: *RTP* nos. 28, 118, 119, 120 and 121; and a local bronze coin from the imperial period: *TMP*, 719-720 no. 1, pl. XCI, XCIII-XCIV. Two instances from Palmyra associate the three gods with several other deities: a relief dated in the first century CE represents from left to right Iarḥibol, Bel, Aglibol, and Arṣu: Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra*, pl. VII. Another, fragmentary, relief represents from left to right an anonymous goddess, Iarḥibol, Bel, Aglibol (and perhaps Arṣu): Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra*, pl. VIII, 2. Cf. below, Chapter III, for a discussion of these formations of deities.

[70] Gawlikowski, "Dieux de Palmyre", 2611 and 2625, is the only scholar who refutes the concept of a triad of Bel. This seems questionable, for the reasons cited above. Provided that the so-called triad is not exclusive and does not cover the entire cult of the temple, we may hold on to the notion. On the association of Astarte with the three gods, see below, Chapter III, 71-72.

The triad of Bel was fairly popular outside Palmyra - in fact, three out of the total of five inscriptions which mention the three gods together were found abroad.[72] Both the hierarchy and the function of the deities mentioned in these inscriptions tally with the situation in the temple of Bel. Clearly therefore, the group refers to the cult of this temple in which Iarḥibol and Aglibol function as Bel's attendants. Their secondary position with respect to Bel is confirmed by a bilingual dedicatory inscription on an altar that was found on the island of Cos. Whereas the Greek text refers to Bel as the only beneficiary, the Palmyrene text dedicates the monument to Bel, Iarḥibol and Aglibol. The references to Bel in the Greek inscriptions from the temple in the necropolis of Dura dated in the Common Era, have to be understood in this light: the cult of the city god implied the presence of his two associates. We may therefore conclude that the cult of this temple tallied with the religious organization in the temple of Bel in Palmyra in the Common Era and that the Palmyrenes of Dura appear to have followed the religious development from their city of origin.

A religious innovation and its sociological context

Having established the correlation between the construction of the new temple of Bel and the creation of Bel's triad, we can turn to the interpretation of this religious innovation. According to Henry Seyrig the creation of the triad of Bel was the result of a radically new astral theology, a modern and sophisticated system of Hellenistic origin, befitting the new building. This theology transformed Bel into a supreme deity of cosmic dimensions, who, as the ruler of the heavenly bodies, determined the fate of the world.[73] Seyrig is definitely right in his assertion that the inscription from Dura testifies to a development related to the new temple of Bel - it is questionable, however, whether this development can be described from a theological point of view.[74] The decoration of the northern *thalamos* shows that astral notions played a role in Bel's cult. However, on the basis of this material it is impossible to arrive at a well-defined idea of any theology current in this temple. Nor do we know anything about the theology in the earlier sanctuary and apart from the names of some of the gods that were worshipped in the Hellenistic temple very little is known about its religious organization. It may be inferred from the archaic relief discussed above, picturing a solar and a lunar deity, that Iarḫibol and Aglibol were among the deities venerated on the tell, and evidence dated before the Common Era suggests that Iarḫibol was intimately connected with Bel and his priests at this time, but we are ignorant with respect to Aglibol's position. On the basis of the material from the Hellenistic temple it is simply impossible to arrive at a reconstruction of its theology. Consequently we have no way of knowing whether, or to what degree, the theology changed when the temple was rebuilt.[75]

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[71] First observed by J. Starcky, "Palmyréniens, nabatéens et arabes du nord avant l'islam", *Histoire des religions,* vol. 4 (ed. M. Brillant and R. Aigrain; Paris 1956), 211. The importance of the Durene inscription for the reconstruction of the Palmyrene triad is apparent from Seyrig's interpretation of the three gods before the inscription from Dura-Europos was published. In "Culte de Bêl et de Baalshamîn", 244, Seyrig notes that the association of Bel with Iarḥibol and Aglibol differs from contemporary representations from Syria that associate a supreme deity with the sun and the moon, because both Iarḥibol and Aglibol had their own cult in Palmyra. Seyrig rightly notes that in this respect the Palmyrene concept has more in common with material from Syria from the earlier period (cf. the examples cited on p. 242), than with material from the Roman period.

[72] A bilingual inscription on an altar from the island of Cos: *PAT* no. 1616 = G. Levi della Vida, "Une bilingue gréco-palmyrénienne à Cos", *Mélanges syriens offerts à monsieur René Dussaud,* vol. 2 (Paris 1939), 883-886. However, compare the improved reading by J. Starcky, *Palmyre* (Paris, 1952), 90, note 11, which is not incorporated in *PAT.* A Greek dedicatory inscription on a relief which in all likelihood originates from Homs: *IGLS* no. 2220 (cf. Milik, *Dédicaces,* 43-44. For the relief: Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra,* pl. XI). A fragmentary bilingual inscription from Rome mentions Bel, Iarḥibol and a third god, in all probability Aglibol: *PAT* no. 0249 (n.d.). Cf. Milik, *Dédicaces,* 266-267, and more recently E. Equini-Schneider, "Il santuario di Bel e delle divinità di Palmira. Communità e tradizioni religiose palmyreni a Roma". *Dialoghi di Archeologia,* 5.1 (1987), 73.

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[73] Seyrig, "Bel de Palmyre", 89-94. There is no firm proof for the assumption that Bel determined the fate of the world. The only inscription that pictures Bel as the Guide of Fortune is a dedication in Greek and Latin to Bel of Apamea, found at Vaison in France. It was in all probability made by a military functionary. The inscription is written on both sides of the altar, the Greek text on one side, the Latin on the other. It was first published by Rey-Coquais, *IGLS* VII, no. 178; idem, "Inscriptions grecques d'Apamée", *AAAS* 23 (1973), no. 11. However, it does not follow from the fact that the god of Apamea bears the same name as Palmyra's supreme deity that we are dealing with the same god. As was pointed out by Dalley, "Bel at Palmyra and Elsewhere", 145, the epithet Bel could be applied to various national gods or patron deities of cities, provided that they were of Mesopotamian origin. Hence we have to reckon with local differences.

[74] The idea that a theology with strong astrological connotations was current among priests in Roman Syria was introduced by Franz Cumont, who based his reconstruction upon a limited number of philosophical texts dating from the first centuries CE. Cf. especially *Les religions orientales dans le paganisme romain* (4th edition, Paris 1929), 111-122. These texts do not come from Palmyra and most date from a later period. Consequently, the general meaning attributed to them with respect to pagan religion in Roman Syria is questionable. Cumont is followed by Seyrig. See, for example, "Bêl de Palmyre", 94, note 1. Given Seyrig's dependence upon Cumont, it is surprising that he advocates the novelty of this theology, for according to Cumont it was based primarily upon Babylonian ideas (cf. note 76 below).

[75] The astrological connotations of the cult of Bel are in accord with Babylonian traditions in Mesopotamia. The Babylonians considered the sun, the moon and the five planets seven great divinities: F. Rochberg-Halton, "Astrology in the Ancient Near East", *ABD* I (1992), 504-507. Cf. also Bel's ordering of the cosmos as described in *Enuma elish*. Babylonian influences were

It is also questionable whether the shift was as radical as Seyrig suggests. He is of the opinion that the cella of the temple of Bel was constructed within a few years. The ambitious building project and the theological transformation would be two sides of the same coin. However, Pietrzykowski points out that the construction of the cella was actually a gradual process, which suggests that its religious organization developed progressively as well. We may reconstruct this religious development by interpreting the history of Bel's temple in the light of Palmyra's social history.

In this context the history of the temple mirrors its growing importance in the religious organization of the oasis and marks a gradual centralization of its cult. When the *thalamos* was consecrated in 32 CE, there were still cult buildings dedicated to other deities situated on the tell, which explains why the Palmyrenes still refer to the temple as 'the house of their gods' in inscriptions bearing dates from the first half of the first century CE.[76] It may be assumed that these deities were closely connected with particular Palmyrene clans. During the first years of its existence, therefore, the new temple may still be characterized as a confederal sanctuary. In the course of time, these cult buildings disappeared and most of the deities attested in archaic inscriptions from the sanctuary are never mentioned in inscriptions from the later period, ousted by Bel and his associates, who are worshipped in the only cult building on the tell, which is referred to as *bt bl*, 'the house of Bel'.[77]

From the very start, the cult of the new temple of Bel was organized along inter-tribal lines, as is apparent from the background of the people contributing to its rebuilding. Whereas most temples in Palmyra were created with the assets of prominent members of a particular clan or 'tribe', individuals belonging to different Palmyrene clans contributed to the construction of the temple of Bel.[78] It is equally significant that these beneficiaries were honoured by institutions that represent the community of Palmyra; initially they were honoured by the people of Palmyra, later by the senate of the city. This is a clear indication of the patriotic and public

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strongest in Palmyra before the Common Era, and it is therefore equally possible that these ideas were introduced prior to the construction of the new temple.

[76] Above, note 53.

[77] Above, note 54.

[78] Apart from *PAT* nos. 0270 and 1353, which refer to contributions of members of the Bene Mattabol and the Bene Komare, the following inscriptions mention contributions to the construction of the temple: *PAT* no. 0269 (51 CE); Cantineau, "Tadmorea", (1933), 176-177, no. 2b (74 CE); *PAT* no. 0260 (175 CE) and *PAT* no. 1370 (218 CE).

character of their action, resulting from the municipal character of the cult.[79] Honorary statues for the members of different clans were erected in the temple's court, and the confederal aspect of the temple is apparent from the organization of its priests in an inter-tribal thiasos.[80]

The triad of Bel may be characterized as a constellation which consciously transcended the traditional genealogical boundaries within the city. Both Iarḫibol and Aglibol were worshipped separately in sanctuaries parallel with the temple of Bel. The sanctuary of Iarḫibol at the Efqa source, which has already been discussed, was one of the most prominent and ancient sanctuaries of the city. The cult at the source concerned the entire community and therefore it is not surprising to find that its god was the most important attendant of the city god. The reason for the presence of Aglibol in this constellation is less evident: in contrast to the cult of Iarḫibol at the Efqa, the cult of this god had an outspoken 'tribal' character.

Aglibol's cult in the 'Sacred Wood'

Aglibol is venerated with Malakbel in a sanctuary which is known from Palmyrene inscriptions as ἱερὸν ἄλσος, the 'Sacred Wood', or *gntʾ ʾlym*, the 'Garden of Gods'.[81] This temple has not thus far been found and is known only from inscriptions and figural representations, none of which can be dated to before the second half of the first century CE.[82] Inscriptions from the second century CE, list the sanctuary of Aglibol and Malakbel as one of the four sanctuaries of the city, which implies that the sanctuary was administered by one of the four 'tribes' that constituted the political body of Palmyra from the end of the first century CE.[83]

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[79] The senate and the people of Palmyra act as the honorary agents of these inscriptions from 74 CE onwards. Before the installation of the senate, the honorary agent likewise consisted of a group of people. The honorary statues erected in 19 and 24 CE were set up by a community of traders or by the people of Palmyra (*PAT* nos. 0270 and 1352; ***Inv.*** IX, 11, Greek text). The statue dating from 51 CE was ordered by the 'assembly of the Palmyrenes' (*PAT* no. 0269).

[80] Milik, *Dédicaces*, 109-110.

[81] For a general discussion of this sanctuary, see Milik, *Dédicaces*, 1-9; Gawlikowski, *Temple*, 49-50. The connection of this sanctuary with Aglibol and Malakbel is made explicit by *PAT* no. 0314 (134-135 CE): *ʿglbwl wmlkbl ʾlhy hlss*; 'Aglibol and Malakbel, gods of the Sacred Wood'. *hlss* transcribes Greek ἄλσος, 'Sacred Wood'. Cf. Gawlikowski, *Temple*, 49, note 134, for further references.

[82] On the possible location of this sanctuary east of the temple of Bel, see Milik, *Dédicaces*, 15.

[83] *PAT* no. 0197 (132 CE); Drijvers, "Greek and Aramaic in Palmyrene Inscriptions", 34-38, pls. I and II (144 CE). The Bene Komare is the only 'tribe' which is explicitly identified as one of the four 'tribes': *PAT* no. 1063 (198 CE).

Palmyrene inscriptions frequently associate the divine couple with the Bene Komare and there can be no doubt that they were in charge of the temple.[84] The clan of the Χομαρήνοι or Χωνεῖται, literally the 'sons of the priests', are first associated with Aglibol and Malakbel in an inscription dated 17 BCE, suggesting that the ancestral cult of the Bene Komare already existed when the temple of Bel was rebuilt at the beginning of the Common Era.[85]

The cult of the 'Sacred Wood' may very well represent one of the oldest religious traditions in the oasis. *Gntʾ ʾlym,* the Palmyrene name of the sanctuary, is partly Canaanite. Canaanite elements in the dialect of Palmyra are best explained as remnants of a language spoken in the oasis before the introduction of Aramaic around the ninth century BCE, and hence testify to an ancient tradition.[86] The antiquity of the cult is further supported by the name Aglibol, a composite name best interpreted as 'Calf of Bol'.[87] Like his companion Iarḫibol in the cult of Bel, Aglibol's name contains the element 'Bol', the original name of Palmyra's supreme god. From this it may be inferred that Aglibol is an indigenous deity, whose cult antedates the introduction of Bel in the oasis.[88]

A relief from the temple of Bel, which once decorated the crossbar of the peristyle south of the entrance porch of the cella, is believed to picture Aglibol and Malakbel in their sanctuary, the 'Sacred Wood' (fig. 17).[89] The two gods are shown shaking hands above an altar packed with fruit. An eagle glides above the altar, holding a palm branch in its claws and a snake or garland in its in beak. The two gods can be identified as Aglibol and Malakbel on the basis of a relief from Rome (pl. XVII) and a relief from Khirbet Ramadan in the Palmyrène (pl. XVIII), on which they are pictured in a very similar way.[90] Aglibol is standing on the right and is wearing military costume. A lunar horn is resting on his shoulders. The figure of Malakbel on the left-hand side of the relief is severely damaged, but it can be inferred from the remaining traces that the god is wearing the local costume. This is confirmed by the representations from Rome and the Palmyrène, both of which picture Malakbel as a young and beardless deity in native dress, without a nimbus. On the extreme right of the relief a small niche or chapel is depicted; on the left there is a second altar and a cypress. The front of the altar is decorated with a goat. Two figures, in all likelihood priests, complete the scene. The small chapel, the two altars and the cypress indicate that Aglibol and Malakbel are represented in their sanctuary, the 'Sacred Wood'. The cypress is appropriate to the name of the temple; moreover, on the relief from Rome Aglibol and Malakbel are depicted in front of a cypress, so we may safely assume that this tree played an important role in the cult of their temple.[91] Both the character and the position of Aglibol in the 'Sacred Wood' accord well with his position in the temple of Bel. It follows from the moon depicted behind his shoulders that Aglibol was a lunar deity in this sanctuary. Of the two gods, Aglibol was clearly more important: the texts invariably mention him before Malakbel and, on representations, the moon god habitually occupies the most prominent position on the right.[92]

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[84] *PAT* nos. 0315 (17 BCE); 1498 (n.d.); 1499 (n.d.); 1503 (n.d.); 1509 (n.d.); 1942 (122 CE); H. Ingholt, "Inscriptions and Sculptures from Palmyra I", *Berytus* 3 (1936), 109 (182 CE).

[85] *PAT* no. 0315. On the etymology of the name of this 'tribe' see Gawlikowski, *Temple*, 36-37; Milik, *Dédicaces*, 103.

[86] For the linguistics of the Semitic name compare Gawlikowski, "Tadmoréen", 93-94. Aglibol and Malakbel were the main deities of this sanctuary, in which other gods were worshipped as well. A Greek inscription published by H. Seyrig, "Deux inscriptions grecques de Palmyre", *Syria* 18 (1937), 372-378, mentions the god Borroaonos.

[87] EGawlikowski, "Dieux de Palmyre", 2620, with reference.

[88] The quest for the antiquity of the cult is obscured by the name of Aglibol's companion Malakbel, which is best translated as 'Messenger of Bel' (cf. below, Chapter VI, note 6).

[89] Seyrig, *Temple de Bêl*, 86, pls. 42, 2 and 43,1, Album 89. The relief has to be dated around 80 CE (cf. above, note 52).

[90] Both reliefs are accompanied by inscriptions. The inscription on the Roman relief is in Greek and Palmyrene and is dated 236 CE: *PAT* no. 0247. Cf. below, Chapter VI, 175. The date of the inscription on the relief from Khirbet Ramadan is lost: *PAT* no. 1750. The monument may be dated in the second century CE on the basis of the style of the relief: *PNO*, 76.

Despite Aglibol's affiliation with a particular clan, it is clear that the god has no 'tribal' quality when he functions as Bel's associate in the new temple of Bel. Before the Common Era, however, Aglibol's cult was still confined to the Bene Komare, as is demonstrated by the dedicatory inscription of the temple in the necropolis at Dura-Europos from the year 33 BCE. Aglibol is missing from this inscription, although one of the dedicants was a member of the Bene Komare. The fact that this individual dedicated the temple together with a member of another clan resulted in a choice of deities devoid of exclusive connotations and clearly Aglibol was not yet in this position.[93] From this it may be inferred that around the beginning of the Common Era, the Bene Komare managed to turn their family god Aglibol into a deity worshipped by the entire Palmyrene population.

The Bene Komare played a prominent role in the construction of the new temple of Bel, with several of them contributing extensively to the rebuilding of the new sanctuary. Moreover, the individual who consecrated the northern *thalamos* to Bel, Iarḫibol and Aglibol in 32 CE was a member of this clan. Two years earlier a certain Maliku, the son of Zabdibol of the Bene Komare, had erected an altar for Allat in the sanctuary of this goddess. The inscription is completed by a globe with three rays, the symbol of Bel.[94] The sanctuary of Allat was administered by the Bene Ma^{c}zin and the fact that this dedication was made by a member of the Bene Komare is peculiar, considering that it was highly unusual for people to contribute to the cult of a family god that was not their own.[95] The connection between the Bene Komare and the cult of Bel, exemplified on the altar dedicated to Allat by the Bel-symbol, provides the best explanation for this anomaly.

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[91] *RTP* no. 162, pictures two altars and a cypress; in all probability the altars of Aglibol and Malakbel in the 'Sacred Wood'.

[92] The relief from Khirbet Ramadan (pl. XVII) is an exception to this rule. However, the dedicatory inscription on the relief does mention Aglibol first: *PAT* no. 1750..

[93] This does not exclude the possibility that the god was worshipped in the Hellenistic temple of Bel. In view of the archaic relief dicussed above, 45-46. Aglibol was probably venerated here. Apparently, however, he was still a family god.

The religious organization of the new temple of Bel therefore mirrors the transformation of existing social structures. A host of ancestral deities pertaining to various groups was gradually replaced by the cult of Bel and his divine associates Iarḫibol and Aglibol in a new formation that transcended family religion without destroying it. In the triad of Bel, the god Aglibol lost his family connotations: concomitantly, however, this god was the object of a cult in a 'tribal' sanctuary. The cult of Bel, Iarḫibol and Aglibol, though, was not confined to a particular group, but was practised by the entire population. The three gods can therefore reasonably be considered the city gods of Palmyra, exemplifying the cult of its municipal sanctuary, and designed to provide its inhabitants with a communal religious identity. In the course of the first century CE, as the temple of Bel gradually developed from a confederal into a municipal sanctuary, a parallel development can be discerned in the organization of Palmyra's civic life; from a confederation of clans, Palmyra changed into a Graeco-Roman city, artificially divided into four administrative quarters or 'tribes', governed by a senate. The centralization of Palmyra's religion and of its political organization are two sides of the same coin.

Centralization and the rise of the Palmyrene caravan trade

Conspicuously, both the religious and the political developments in Palmyra begin with the Roman involvement in the city's municipal affairs and coincide with the explosive growth of the caravan trade. The oldest inscriptions that testify to the rebuilding of the temple of Bel date from the years 19 and 24 CE and also represent the earliest testimonies to Palmyra's commercial relationships with the East. Both honorific inscriptions were found in the temple of Bel. The oldest was erected by Palmyrene and Greek traders who lived in Seleucia on the Tigris: [96]

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[94] This inscription is mentioned by H. J. W. Drijvers, "Das Heiligtum der arabischen Göttin Allat im westlichen Stadtteil von Palmyra", AW 7/3 (1976), 36, and has as yet not been published. The symbol is frequently depicted on Palmyrene tesserae mentioning Bel: *TMP*, 147-148.

[95] Chapter III, 78-79.

[....ἔμπ]ο[ρ]οι Πα[λμυρηνοὶ]
[καὶ Ἕλλην]ες ἀνέσ[τη]σ[αν]
[τὸν ἀνδριάν]τα Ἰεδειβ[ήλῳ]
[Ἀζίζου Παλ]μυρηνῷ φ[υλῆς]
[Μανθαβω]λείων ἐπεὶ
[κατεσπο]ύδασεν εἰς τὴν
[κτίσιν τ]οῦ ναοῦ Βήλου

byrḥ ʾb šnt 330 [*ṣlmʾ dnh dy*]
ydyʿbl br ʿzyzw br ydyʿ [*bl dy mn*]
bny mtbw[*l dy*] *ʾqym*[*w lh tdmryʾ*]
wywnyʾ dy bslwkyʾ [*bdyl dy*]
qm wšmš bmgdʾ r[*bʾ lbt bl*]

Greek: The Palm[yrene and Greek] traders erected [this statue] for Iedibel, [the son of Azizos], Palmyrene, of the 'tribe' of the Mantabolites, because he has taken an active part in [the erection] of the temple of Bel.

Palmyrene: In the month Ab, of the year 330 (August 19 CE), [this statue of] Iedibel, the son of Azizu, the son of Iedi[bel, of the] Bene Mattabol, which the [Palmyrenes] and Greeks in Seleucia erected for him, [because he] has been their chief and has served with a generous gift (the construction of) [the temple of Bel].

In 24 CE traders living in Babylon erected an honorary statue for very similar reasons:[97]

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[96] *PAT* no. 0270. Originally on the same tablet as *PAT* no. 0271, a dedication by his son. Since the latter is dated 17 CE, Ernest Will proposes dating the accompanying inscription in 17 CE as well. Cf. Gawlikowski, *Temple*, 68.

[97] *PAT* no. 1352 (copied in the second century CE.).

Μάλιχον Νεσᾶ τοῦ Βωλάα τοῦ ἐπικαλ
ουμένου 'Ασάσου φυλῆς Χομαρηνῶν Παλ
μυρηνῶν ὁ δῆμος εὐνοίας ἕνεκα

b[yr]ḥ knwn šnt 336 ṣlmʾ dnh dy mlkw
br nšʾ br bwlḥʾ dy mtqrʾ ḥšš dy mn bny
kmrʾ dy ʾqymw lh t[g]ryʾ klhwn dy bmdynt
bbl mn dy špr lhwn bkl gns klh wʿ[d]r bnynʾ
dy h[y]klʾ dy bl wyhb mn kysh dy lʾ ʿbdh
ʾnš bdyl kwt ʾqymw lh ṣlmʾ dnh lyqrh

Greek: (This statue of) Maliku, (the son of) Nesha, the son of Bolḥa, also called Ḥasas, of the 'tribe' of the Komarenes, (has been erected by) the people of the Palmyrenes, on account of his generosity

Palmyrene: In the month Kanun of the year 336 (November 24 CE); this statue of Maliku, the son of Nesha, the son of Bolḥa, who is called Ḥashash, of the Bene Komare, which erected for him all the traders in the district of Babylon, because he has favoured them in all (possible) ways and has helped (in) the construction of the temple of Bel and gave from his own purse, which nobody (else) did; for this reason they erected this statue for him in his honour.

The two inscriptions show that Palmyrene traders had an interest in the building of the new temple and that the people who contributed to the costs of its construction were themselves involved in trading activities and possibly assembled their wealth by this means. It was argued above that Palmyra's caravan trade cut across the genealogical divisions within the city and was one of the reasons for the political unification of the clans. The interest of Palmyrene merchants in the new temple of Bel suggests that the rise of the caravan trade was also a major incentive for the religious unification of the Palmyrene clans. Not surprisingly, members of the Bene Komare, the clan that played such an important role in the construction of Bel's new temple, are known to have played a prominent role in the Palmyrene trade with the East.[98]

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[98] Their commercial interests involved political activities as well. A Palmyrene inscription from the year 21 CE records that the members of the Bene Komare and the Bene Mattabol erected an honorary statue for a member of the Bene Komare because 'he had been their chief and had made peace between them': *PAT* no. 0261.

Conclusion

Bel's new temple and the creation of his triad testify to the formation of a municipal religious identity in Palmyra in the first century CE. The city gods of Palmyra were particularly popular among Palmyrene merchants living abroad - in fact the three instances of the triad that were found outside Palmyra can in all likelihood be ascribed to Palmyrene traders. To these we may add the inscriptions that were found in the Palmyrene temple in the necropolis of Dura-Europos. It may be inferred from the earliest testimony from this sanctuary that people belonging to different Palmyrene clans acted together because they were involved in commercial activities and that their joint interest encouraged them to prefer communal deities to their ancestral gods. The choice of a communal religious identity is exactly the kind of religious behaviour we expect to find among small groups of merchants who live in close contact with their city of origin.[99] Parallels are to be found among Assyrian traders travelling between their homeland and the trading colony in Karum Kanish in the second millennium BCE, and among the merchants from Tyre in Carthage.[100]

The dedicatory inscription of the temple in the necropolis at Dura-Europos shows that the formation of a municipal Palmyrene religious identity came about gradually. The choice of Bel and Iarḫibol in 33 BCE resembles the preference of Palmyrene merchants for the triad of Bel at a later date, for Bel and Iarḫibol were the communal deities of the inhabitants of Palmyra before the Common Era. Hence it follows that the creation of the triad of Bel was not a radical innovation, but the outcome of a process that had started at least sixty years earlier, initiated by Palmyra's long-distance trade and taking a definite shape in the religious organization of the new temple of Bel when the caravan trade grew explosively in the course of the first century CE. We may therefore conclude that Palmyra's external relations had a decisive influence on the religious organization of the oasis.

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[99] H. Solin, "Juden und Syrer im westlichen Teil der römischen Welt. Eine ethnisch-demographische Studie mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der sprachlichen Zustände", *ANRW* II, 29.2 (1983), 624-625.

[100] K. van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria and Israel*, 72-74; Teixidor, "Port romain", 46.

CHAPTER THREE

BEL AND HIS ASSOCIATES

The overlap of civic and 'tribal' religion

As far as can be understood from the available sources, the triad of Bel was especially popular with Palmyrenes living in faraway places such as Rome and the island of Cos. On monuments that have been found closer by, in Dura-Europos and in Palmyra's hinterland, Bel's triad invariably occurs with other Palmyrene gods. In chapter II it was argued that Bel's triad embodied the civic cult of Palmyra. The following pages set out to explain the presence of the various additional gods and to establish their relationship with the deities venerated in Palmyra's city temple. In order to do this, the chapter discusses the position of these deities in the city of Palmyra, paying particular attention to their relationship with the cult in the temple of Bel. Our primary interest is in the meaning of the configuration of deities attested in Dura-Europos, but the situation there has to be understood in the light of other extra-Palmyrene sources available to us, and in this respect monuments originating from the Palmyrène provide valuable complementary information. Palmyra recruited personnel and animals for the caravans from this region, and in view of the military skills of the people living in the Palmyrène, it may be presumed that many of the Palmyrene soldiers serving in the Roman army also came from Palmyra's hinterland. Both Palmyrene merchants and soldiers sojourned in Dura-Europos and it is reasonable to suppose that some of them originated in the Palmyrène.

The 'group of Bel' in Dura-Europos and the Palmyrène

Bel's triad is never attested independently on monuments originating from Dura-Europos. For instance, the dipinto from the 'house of the banquet' bearing a date in 194 CE is addressed to Bel, Iarḥibol, Aglibol and Arṣu.[1] The so-called 'Otes fresco', at the back of chapel K in the temple of the Palmyrene gods, dating from the third century CE, associates Bel's triad with Arṣu and a goddess, presumably Allat-Athena (pl. XII).[2] The helmeted head of a deity on a small fresco fragment from Bel's temple in the necropolis may likewise be identified as Arṣu (fig. 11).[3] Taking the compilation of deities in the 'house of the banquet' and on the fresco in room K, we may assume that the god is part of a more extended group of deities, which at least included Bel's triad. A dipinto on a potsherd originating from the necropolis also associates Bel with Arṣu[4] A relief, which was found in Dura-Europos several years ago, is dedicated to Bel but represents an event which in all probability is related to the cult of Arṣu (pl. X).[5] It is therefore evident that the god Arṣu is frequently associated with Bel, or with Bel's triad, in Dura-Europos: the present chapter seeks to determine the nature of this relationship.

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[1] Appendix, inscription no. 32.

The practice of associating Arṣu with Bel or with his triad is also common on monuments that have been found in the Palmyrène. A relief from Jebel al-Merah represents Arṣu next to Iarḥibol in the triad of Bel, a formation which tallies with the deities mentioned by the dipinto from the 'house of the banquet' in Dura-Europos.[6] On most monuments other Palmyrene deities are added to Bel's triad and Arṣu. A fragmentary relief from Umm es-Salabikh, dedicated by a *strategos* of Anat and Gamla in 225 CE, represents, from left to right, two anonymous gods of the desert, Arṣu, Astarte, and Iarḥibol. On the part of the relief that is now lost Bel and Aglibol were probably represented.[7] A relief from Wadi-^{c}Arafa, dedicated in 153 CE, represents, from left to right, Nemesis-Allat, Aglibol, Malakbel, Bel, Baalshamin, Astarte and Arṣu. The left-hand side of the relief is lost, but it follows from the dedicatory inscription that Abgal, a local deity popular in this region, was represented here.[8]

Arṣu is frequently associated with Bel's triad on monuments from the Palmyrène, but in contrast to the monuments from Dura-Europos he is not a permanent member of the group. On three reliefs Arṣu's place is taken by other Palmyrene deities. A relief found in Al-Maqate^{c} represents, from left to right,

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[2] Appendix, 306-309.

[3] Appendix, 208-209.

[4] Appendix, inscription no. 60.

[5] Appendix, inscription no. 31, and 279-282.

[6] Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra*, pl. IX, 1; *SP*, pl. 102. Inscription: *PAT* 1569 (n.d.).

[7] Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra*, pl. IX, 2; *SP*, pl. 103. Inscription: *PAT* no. 2757.

[8] Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra*, pl. X, 2; *SP*, pl. 107 (108 in the catalogue). Inscription: *PAT* no. 1568.

Iarḥibol, Baalshamin, Bel, Aglibol, and Astarte,[9] while another relief from the Palmyrène, the exact provenance of which is not known, pictures Astarte, Iarḥibol, Bel, Aglibol, Malakbel (?) and Allat-Athena.[10] To this we may add the fragmentary relief that in all likelihood originated from Homs. Here, the inscription on the plinth dedicates the monument to Bel, Iarḥibol and Aglibol, whereas the relief itself depicts at least two more deities. To the right of Aglibol a goddess whose iconography tallies with that of the Greek goddess Nemesis is depicted, identified by the accompanying Greek inscription as Athena. To her right there is a god wearing indigenous Arab dress, identified by the legend next to his head as Keraunios.[11] Thus Bel, Iarḥibol and Aglibol are associated on extra-Palmyrene monuments with Arṣu, Astarte, Malakbel, Allat and Baalshamin. In addition, we find several locally venerated deities, such as Abgal and various anonymous gods of the desert.

The 'group of Bel' as a theological formation

The selection of deities associated with Bel, Iarḥibol and Aglibol on monuments from Dura-Europos and the Palmyrène obeys unspoken criteria. Gawlikowski argues that several of these gods had a place in the temple of Bel in Palmyra, holding that the group of deities associated with Bel in the cult of his temple was not confined to Iarḥibol and Aglibol, but comprised other gods as well.[12] Starting from the symbolic representation of the firmament on the ceiling of the northern *thalamos* in the temple of Bel (fig. 15), Gawlikowski argues that by analogy with the identification of the bust of Jupiter, the sun and the moon as Bel, Iarḥibol and Aglibol respectively, the personifications of the four remaining planets also represent local gods.[13] He identifies the personification of the planet Venus as the goddess Astarte, whereas the planet Mars would represent Arṣu. The local identity of the planets Saturn and Mercury is obscure, but Saturn is tentatively identified with Malakbel and Mercury with Nabû.[14] However, these two deities hardly ever occur with Bel on other Palmyrene monuments, and for this reason Gawlikowski suggests that perhaps the two are added to the group in order to arrive at the obligatory seven luminary bodies.[15] On the basis of the representation on the ceiling, Gawlikowski concludes that, apart from Iarḫibol and Aglibol, at least two other Palmyrene deities, Arṣu and Astarte, were the object of a cult in Bel's temple. This, he argues, is supported by the extra-Palmyrene monuments, on which Arṣu and Astarte are frequently associated with Bel's triad.

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[9] Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra*, pl. X, 2; *SP*, pl. 108 (107 in the catalogue). Inscription: *PAT* no. 1567.

[10] Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra*, pl. XXXVI.

[11] Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra*, pl. XI. Inscription: *IGLS* no. 2220. Cf. Milik, *Dédicaces*, 43-44. The epithet Keraunios is normally applied to Zeus or to deities identified with Zeus. The god on the relief, however, is wearing the local dress of the desert people and does not resemble a great sky god. Possibly this Arab god was the supreme god of a municipality, as a consequence of which he was identified with Zeus.

According to Gawlikowski's hypothesis, Arṣu's popularity in Dura-Europos would be the result of his role in the cult of the temple of Bel in Palmyra. However, the proposed interpretation of the ceiling cannot be supported by means of the evidence from Palmyra. Moreover, it is questionable whether the extra-Palmyrene monuments can be used to corroborate Gawlikowski's hypothesis. The identification of the sun and the moon as Iarḫibol and Aglibol is plausible, but it is doubtful whether the four remaining planets are meant to represent deities associated with Bel in his cult. Whereas a great many monuments originating from outside Palmyra associate Bel's triad with other, additional Palmyrene gods, only two similar reliefs have been found in Palmyra proper. On one of these reliefs Bel, Iarḫibol and Aglibol are accompanied by Arṣu.[16] The second relief pictures Bel's triad with a goddess and one or two deities who have not been preserved.[17] On neither of the two reliefs is Bel's triad associated with four deities, as is the case on the ceiling. These reliefs do not therefore substantiate the hypothesis according to which a fixed group of deities was associated with Bel in his temple; neither is there any evidence from which it may be inferred that Arṣu received a cult in Bel's temple on a permanent basis. Thus Gawlikowski's hypothesis that the planet Mars represented on the ceiling is identical with Arṣu is not supported by other material from Bel's temple.

The only goddess known to have been the object of a cult in Bel's temple is Astarte. She was Bel's female companion, as is clear from a recently published inscription from the temple of Allat bearing the date 137 CE, which commemorates a contribution to the cult of Bel, Iarḫibol, Aglibol and Astarte.[18] However, it is far

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[12] Gawlikowski, "Syrischen Götterhimmel, 23; idem, "Dieux de Palmyre", 2613 and 2623-2625.

[13] Above, Chapter II, 55-56, for a description of the ceiling and references.

[14] Gawlikowski, "Syrischen Götterhimmel", 23; idem, "Dieux de Palmyre", 2613.

[15] Gawlikowski, "Dieux de Palmyre", 2625.

[16] Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra*, pl. VII; *SP*, pl. 100. The relief was found in the temple of Bel.

[17] Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra*, pl. VIII, 2; *SP*, pl. 101.

[18] Drijvers, "Inscriptions from Allât's Sanctuary", 111-113, pls. I-II. The possibility that Astarte was Bel's female companion was suggested frequently in the past; already H. Seyrig, "La

from certain that Astarte is to be identified with the planet Venus on the ceiling of the northern *thalamos*. As far as can be understood from the available evidence, Astarte's cult in the temple of Bel proper coincided with the extension of this temple around 50 CE, which post-dates the ceiling. During this period the ground plan of the temple changed drastically.[19] Facing the original cult niche, a second *thalamos* was constructed on the southern side of the temple. In view of the important cultic function of chambers of this kind, the southern annex probably resulted from a development in the cultic organization of the temple.[20]

The southern *thalamos* was in all probability devoted to Astarte. A fragmentary Greek inscription dated in 51 CE commemorates the donation of various cult instruments to the temple of Bel by a certain Mokimu, the son of Ogeilu, alias Ḥokaissu, of the Bene Zabdibol. Amongst the gifts is a cushion for what should probably be restored as 'the couch of the adyton'.[21] In all likelihood the couch is Astarte's; the bed of the goddess is represented on a well-known Palmyrene tessera, and it is therefore probable that the southern *thalamos* was constructed in order to house the couch of the goddess who was Bel's female companion.[22]

It follows from the revised building history of Bel's temple that Astarte was only associated with Bel in his temple around 50 CE. Astarte's exalted position in Bel's cult at this time is confirmed by a relief that originally decorated the entrance gate of the cella, dated around 80 CE. This relief was visible to all entering the cella; a clear indication of the importance of the three deities who are represented (fig. 16).[23] In the centre a young beardless deity stands with a radiant nimbus

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parèdre de Bêl à Palmyre", *Syria* 37 (1960), 68-74. Inscriptions refer to the goddess as *ᶜštrtᵓ*, 'Astarte'; or *ᶜštrtᵓ ᵓštrᵓ* 'Astarte the goddess'. A small votive altar from the temple of Bel: *PAT* no. 2751 (133 CE or later): *ᶜštr[tᵓ] ᵓštrᵓ*. *ᵓštr* is used in Palmyra in the sense of 'goddess', not as the name of the Babylonian goddess Ishtar: "ᵓštr", *DNWSI*, 130-131. The only other goddess that receives this epithet is the goddess Baᶜaltak: *PAT* no. 2750 (n.d.; cf. Milik, *Dédicaces*, 219). On several inscriptions the name of a goddess, now lost, is preceded by *ᵓštrᵓ*: the inscription of the famous relief figuring a goddess accompanied by a dog: *PAT* nos. 0008 (n.d.); 1511 (n.d.; 22 BCE or 82 BCE, cf. Milik, *Dédicaces*, 172-173); 0331 (148 CE or later).

[19] Chapter II, 52-53.

[20] Pietrzykowski, *Adyta Swiqtyn Palmyrenskich*, 135, denies that the southern *thalamos* is the result of a development in the cult of the temple, and ascribes its construction to the wish to make the temple more impressive. This is unlikely in view of the cultic function of the southern *thalamos*, rightly observed by the same author, *op. cit.*, 130.

[21] *PAT* no. 0269 (51 CE). M. Gawlikowski, *Temple*, 69-70, restores ll. 6-7: [κ]αὶ πρ[οσ]κε[φ]αλάδιον εἰς τὴν τῆς ἀ[δύτου] [κ]λείνην. Cf. Milik, *Dédicaces*, 154-155, who restitutes τὴν τῆς Ἀ(σ[τ]άρ[της θεᾶς] [κ]λείνην.

[22] *RTP* no 124. Face *a* mentions Bel; face *b* mentions Astarte and pictures a couch and a bird, in all probability a dove. Cf. Bel's bed represented on *RTP* no. 60. Cf. the discussion by Seyrig, "Trois bas-reliefs religieux de type palmyrénien", *Syria* 13 (1932), 260-263; idem, *Temple de Bêl*, 242.

[23] Seyrig, *Temple de Bêl*, 84-85, pl. 39, Album 31; *SP*, pl. 52.

around his head. He is wearing military costume and is armed with a spear and a sword. To his right is a god clad in a similar outfit, carrying a spear, with a crescent resting on his head. To the left of the sun god a goddess is standing, clad in a long *chiton* and a *himation* and holding a sceptre in her left hand. The solar deity in the centre is undoubtedly Iarḥibol, and as Iarḥibol's companion Aglibol was the only moon god venerated in Palmyra the moon god in this relief may be identified accordingly.[24] The identity of the goddess was long debated. In the iconography of Palmyra various goddesses are represented in a similar way, but owing to the inscription from the temple of Allat referred to above, she can now be identified as Astarte.[25] Thus the relief that adorned the gate of the cella pictured the three gods who were venerated with Bel in his sanctuary.[26] Since Astarte's cult in the temple of Bel post-dates the construction of the northern *thalamos*, it cannot be proved that she was already represented on the ceiling, though: hence at present, there is no firm proof that the ceiling reflects the cultic organization of the temple.

The majority of the monuments on which the triad of Bel is represented with other Palmyrene deities were found outside Palmyra and consequently do not necessarily mirror the religious organization of Bel's temple. Astarte and Arṣu are the deities most frequently associated with the triad, but the two gods hardly ever occur together on these monuments. In fact, the monuments from Dura-Europos show a clear preference for Arṣu, but never represent Astarte. This observation is difficult to reconcile with the hypothesis that the two gods are members of a fixed group of deities whose cult was based in Bel's temple.[27] Moreover, Astarte and

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[24] P. Linant de Bellefonds, "Iarhibol", *LIMC* V.1 (1990), 624-626. The crescent resting on Aglibol's head is an unusual feature in the iconography of the god. Representations of Aglibol dated in the CE invariably picture the moon behind his shoulders. The available evidence is listed by M. le Glay, "Aglibol", *LIMC* I.1, (1981), 298-302. Another archaic relief, found in the temple of Baalshamin, depicts the crescent below the bust of the god, in a way very similar to the representation on the ceiling of the northern *thalamos* of Bel: *SB*, I, 221-222; *SB* II, pl. CVII, 4. In all probability this mirrors the antiquated iconography of the god. The only parallel is to be found on an archaic relief from the Hellenistic temple of Bel. Cf. above, Chapter II, 45-46.

[25] As a result, the majority of scholars propose to see all these deities as manifestations of one and the same goddess, and assume that the many names of female deities are actually the name of one goddess. Alternatively, Drijvers, *Edessa*, 103-104, offers a sociological solution to the many goddesses that were worshipped in Palmyra. He suggests that they were different deities, worshipped by different groups of the population. I agree with Drijvers' solution.

[26] This is confirmed by *RTP* no. 121. On face *a* are the busts of Bel, Iarḥibol and Aglibol, on face *b* a goddess is standing, accompanied by the inscription *ʿštrt*ʾ. For this reading: J. Starcky, "Deux inscriptions palmyréniennes", *MUSJ* 38 (1962), 130, note 1, followed by Milik, *Dédicaces,* 99 and 172. A similar goddess figures to the right of Iarḥibol, Bel and Aglibol, on a fragmentary relief from Palmyra: Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra*, pl. VIII, 2; *SP,* pl. 101. Cf. the similar cases from the Palmyrène, above, 68-69.

[27] In total there are nine or ten examples of an extended group of Bel originating outside Palmyra (seven from the Palmyrène and two or three from Dura-Europos). Out of the ten only

Arṣu are by no means the only Palmyrene deities represented on these reliefs: we also encounter Baalshamin, Allat-Nemesis, and Malakbel, and it is impossible for these three gods to have been the local deities behind the personifications of the planets Saturn and Mercury on the ceiling of the cult niche.[28] On the evidence of the available material, the number and the configuration of the deities associated with the triad vary in what seems to be a random fashion, in which it is impossible to detect any system or fixed order, let alone to find a basis for using the group of deities represented on these monuments to reconstruct the cult in the temple of Bel. The only fixed elements in these formations are Bel, Iarḥibol and Aglibol, its tutelary deities. Obviously, the additional gods are somehow related to the deities of Palmyra's city temple but there is, however, no reason to assume that the various constellations mirror the temple's cultic organization.

The 'group of Bel' as a sociological formation

The deities associated with the triad of Bel on monuments outside Palmyra are Astarte, Arṣu, Baalshamin, Allat-Nemesis, and Malakbel. Significantly, each is the tutelary deity of an important Palmyrene sanctuary: in all likelihood they are the main deities of the sanctuaries administered by the four 'tribes' of Palmyra. An inscription from the sanctuary of Baalshamin dated 132 CE, and an inscription from the sanctuary of Allat from the year 144 CE, list four sanctuaries, in each of which the 'caravan of all the Palmyrenes' set up a statue of Soados, the son of Bolyada, a famous caravan leader.[29] The four sanctuaries listed in the inscription from 132 CE are the sanctuary of Baalshamin, the sanctuary of Arṣu, the 'Sacred Wood' (the sanctuary of Aglibol and Malakbel) and the temple of Atargatis. The inscription from 144 CE mentions the sanctuary of Allat instead of the sanctuary of Baalshamin.

The sanctuaries listed in the inscriptions from the sanctuaries of Baalshamin and Allat were administered by the four 'tribes' of the city referred to in other

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two - the reliefs from Umm es-Salabikh (above, note 7) and from Wadi ᶜArafa (above, note 8) - associate both Astarte and Arṣu with the triad of Bel.

[28] On the equation Allat-Athena with Nemesis, see A. Invernizzi, "The Investiture of Nemesis-Allat in Hatra", *Mesopotamia* 24 (1989), 129-130, esp. note 2, with references to earlier literature.

[29] *PAT* no. 0197 (132 CE; cf. Drijvers, "Greek and Aramaic in Palmyrene Inscriptions", 41, for additional corrections); Drijvers, *op. cit*, 33-39, pls. I-II (144 CE).

inscriptions.[30] The sanctuary of Aglibol and Malakbel was administered by the Bene Komare and the temple of Arṣu by the Bene Mattabol, while the temples of Baalshamin and Allat were both founded and administered by the Bene Maᶜzin. This readily explains why the temple of Allat replaces that of Baalshamin in the inscription that was found in her sanctuary. We do not know for certain which 'tribe' was in charge of the sanctuary of Atargatis, but it is very plausible that her temple was administered by the Bene Mita, if, as seems likely, they were the fourth 'tribe' of Palmyra.[31] In 140 CE, the *boulè* of Palmyra dedicated a statue to a certain Ahofali, a member of the Bene Mita, who performed 'pious works' (*mḥrmn*) for Malakbel, Gad Taimi and Atargatis (*ᶜtrᶜth*), the 'good' (*ṭbyʾ*) or 'ancestral' (πατρῴοις) gods.[32]

The four 'tribes' were not tribes in the traditional, nomadic sense of the word, but new and artificial constructions, based upon co-residence.[33] Hence the sanctuaries of the four 'tribes' are more appropriately designated as the sanctuaries of a city quarter or neighbourhood. Representatives of the four 'tribes' or quarters constituted the *boulè*, and together represented the city of Palmyra. By analogy with the civic functioning of the four 'tribes', it may be presumed that their tutelary deities, irrespective of their original association with particular families, likewise attained a certain municipal status. However, although the four 'tribes' and their gods had civic connotations, they were not civic institutions, a role confined to the Palmyrene senate and the temple of Bel. Both levels of organization were, however, closely related, in that representatives of the four 'tribes' constituted the Palmyrene senate and, in turn, the tutelary deities of their sanctuaries were associated with Bel in the city temple. If this interpretation is correct, it implies that the 'group of Bel' reflects the social and religious organization of the oasis.

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[30] *PAT* nos. 2769 (171 CE) (αἱ δὲ τῆς πόλεως τέσσαρες φυλαί); 1063 (198 CE); 1378 (199 CE). Cf. Schlumberger, "Quatre tribus", 127, for the association of the four 'tribes' with the sanctuaries.

[31] Contra Teixidor, "Cultes tribaux", 284, who states that the Bene Mita were in charge of the sanctuary of Iarḥibol. The identification of the Bene Mita as one of the four 'tribes' was already proposed by Schlumberger, "Quatre tribus", 132. Epigraphic evidence shows that the Bene Mita were an influential group in Palmyra from the beginning of the Common Era onwards. Cf. the discussion of inscription no. 16 in the appendix.

[32] *PAT* no. 0273 (140 CE).

[33] Cf. the discussion of the four 'tribes' in Chapter I, above, 24-25.

Atargatis

The tutelary deities of four of the five sanctuaries - Aglibol and Malakbel, Baalshamin, Allat, and Arṣu - are exactly those associated with Bel on the monuments that were found outside Palmyra. The tutelary deity of the fifth sanctuary, the goddess Atargatis, is never associated with Bel on these monuments; instead, Bel and his companions are frequently associated with the goddess Astarte. From the middle of the first century CE Astarte was worshipped with Bel in his temple. There are no Palmyrene sources referring to a separate temple dedicated to Astarte, but by analogy with the autonomous sanctuaries dedicated to Bel's attendants Iarḥibol and Aglibol, it may be assumed that she had her own sanctuary in Palmyra. Whereas no sanctuary can be ascribed to Palmyra's most important goddess, Palmyrene inscriptions attribute the temple of one of the four 'tribes' to the goddess Atargatis. Despite the eminent position of this sanctuary, Atargatis is rarely attested in Palmyrene sources: apart from the two inscriptions which list her temple as one of the four sanctuaries, the goddess is named on one tessera and in one inscription only.[34] Given the importance of Atargatis' sanctuary and the prominent position of Astarte in the temple of Bel and on other Palmyrene monuments, it is therefore probable that the names Atargatis and Astarte refer to the same goddess. This hypothesis is strengthened by the iconographical similarity between Atargatis and Astarte-Gad Tadmor, a point to which we shall return in the next chapter.

Baalshamin and Bel

The hypothesis that the deities associated with Bel's triad on extra-Palmyrene monuments are the tutelary deities of the sanctuaries of the four 'tribes', provides the only satisfactory explanation for the association of the god Baalshamin with Bel on two reliefs from the Palmyrène.[35] Baalshamin is the tutelary deity of a sanctuary located in the northern part of the city. It is one of the few Palmyrene temples to have been carefully excavated and extensively published, and we are therefore comparatively well informed about its building history, the character of its tutelary deity and his divine co-residents, as well as its clientele.[36]

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[34] *RTP* no. 201, and *PAT* no. 0273 (140 CE). From this it cannot be concluded that her cult was not popular in Palmyra, as Teixidor, *Pantheon*, 71, suggests.

[35] For a description of these reliefs, see above, notes 8 and 9.

On the basis of the material from his temple, Baalshamin can be characterized as a supreme deity with cosmic dimensions, strongly resembling the god Bel in this respect. Like Bel, Baalshamin is equated with Zeus in Greek inscriptions.[37] Baalshamin's cosmic character is apparent from Palmyrene inscriptions which characterize the god as *mrʾ ʿlmʾ*, 'lord of the world', or 'lord of eternity'.[38] Two lintels which subsequently adorned the cult niche of his temple typify Baalshamin as the ruler of the cosmos in a way that is very similar to the decoration of the northern *thalamos* in the temple of Bel, and indeed the original lintel is more or less contemporary with the reliefs from that temple. Like the lintel that adorns the northern *thalamos*, it contains a representation of an eagle with outstretched wings. Under its right wing is the bust of a moon god and under its left wing the bust of a sun god.[39] When the sanctuary was rebuilt around 130 CE, it was replaced by a lintel depicting seven planetary busts, i.e. the same configuration that adorns the ceiling of the cult niche in the temple of Bel.[40] Interestingly, the most prominent position in the centre is occupied by the personification of the planet Saturn instead of Jupiter. On the ceiling of the northern *thalamos* of the temple of Bel, Jupiter personifies Bel. Possibly, therefore, Saturn represents Baalshamin.

Both Bel and Baalshamin are presented as supreme deities in their individual sanctuaries in Palmyra. From a logical point of view it is, of course, impossible to worship two distinct supreme gods at the same time, a paradox in the religion of Palmyra that has puzzled scholars for many years and has been interpreted in a number of ways.[41] Some argue that the two cults were competitive, whereas others advocate their peaceful coexistence.[42] However, all agree that Bel and Baalshamin were worshipped separately by two distinct groups that simultaneously propagated the supremacy of their god.[43] The association of Bel with Baalshamin on the two reliefs from the Palmyrène is accounted for by the theological ignorance of the rural population.[44] For long these reliefs were the only witnesses to simultaneous devotion to both deities but recently, however, new evidence has come to light which proves that the cults of Bel and Baalshamin were not mutually exclusive in Palmyra.

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[36] *SB* I-II and III.

[37] Equation with Zeus: *PAT* nos. 0305 (130-131 CE) and 0197 (132 CE). One bilingual inscription, not from the temple proper, *PAT* no. 1571 (n.d.), characterizes the god as Ζεὺς ῞υψιστος καὶ ἐπήκοος, rendered in Palmyrene as *Bʿlšmn rbʾ wrḥmnʾ*, 'the great and merciful Baalshamin'. The same Palmyrene expression is attested in *PAT* no. 0334 (89 CE), with respect to the 'Anonymous God'. Baalshamin's affinity with the head of the Greek pantheon is also apparent from his iconography. Cf. below, Chapter IV, note 66.

[38] *Mrʾ ʿlmʾ*; *PAT* no. 0332 (114 CE). The same epithet occurs in *PAT* no. 0258 (n.d.), a bilingual inscription from Tayyibeh. The Greek text of this inscription says that the monument was dedicated to Ζεὺς Μεγίστος Κεραύνιος, the 'Great Thundering Zeus'. Both the Greek and Palmyrene epithets are frequently applied to the so-called 'Anonymous God' (for example *PAT* nos. 0344 (132 CE); 0335 (135 CE); 1917 (162 CE)).

[39] Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra*, 16, pl. XXXII; *SP*, pls. 83-85. By analogy with the lintel from the temple of Bel, Henry Seyrig proposed to identify the busts of the moon and the sun on the lintel from the temple of Baalshamin as the Palmyrene deities Aglibol and Malakbel and thereby introduced the notion of the triad of Baalshamin.

[40] Gawlikowski and Pietrykowski, "Sculptures du temple de Baalshamîn", 448-449, fig. 7.

An inscription from the sanctuary of Allat relates that in the year 126/127 CE a member of the Aaki-clan of the Bene Ma^{c}zin ordered six thousand denarii from his legacy to be spent on a gold and silver basin for his ancestral goddess Allat, a gold basin for Bel, Iarḫibol, Aglibol and Astarte, and a silver basin for Baalshamin, Duraḫlun and the goddess Belti.[45] This inscription shows that the joint worship of Bel and Baalshamin is not a manifestation of theological ignorance, but rather testifies to the simultaneous existence of 'tribal' and civic religion in Palmyra. The temple of Bel was the sanctuary of all inhabitants of Palmyra, irrespective of their clan or origin; simultaneously, however, the diverse social groupings held on to their family religion in various 'tribal' sanctuaries. During the entire course of its existence the temple of Baalshamin was a 'tribal' sanctuary, built and owned by the Bene Ma^{c}zin.[46] It is this 'tribal' character of Baalshamin's cult that explains his association with Bel on monuments from the Palmyrène.[47] Thus the specific constellation of deities on these reliefs is due to the socio-religious organization of the oasis and does not reflect either theological ignorance or a theological system current in Bel's sanctuary.

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[41] Seyrig, "Bêl de Palmyre", *Syria* 48 (1971), 91. Teixidor, *Pantheon*, 9: "Bel and Baalshamin are systematically invoked in their inscriptions as Zeus, and Zeus could be but one."

[42] A competition between both cults was posited by Eissfeldt, *Tempel und Kulte*, 92; *TMP*, 305-329; Recently again: A. Feldtkeller, "Synkretismus und Pluralismus am Beispiel von Palmyra", *ZRGG* 48 (1996), 34: „Ein Gott, dessen Name "Herr des Himmels" bedeutet, *kann* nicht zu einer untergeordneten Gottheit unter einem fremden "Planetengott" werden, ohne seinen Charakter ganz aufzugeben ... So war der Konflikt zwischen Bel und Baalshamin primär durch interne Sinngehalte beider Systeme vorprogrammiert." Peaceful but separate co-existence: Seyrig, "Bêl de Palmyre", 97-99; Drijvers, *Ba^{c}al Shamîn de Heer van de hemel*, 14; Starcky and. Gawlikowski, *Palmyre*, 98; Gawlikowski, "Dieux de Palmyre", 2626; Will, *Palmyréniens*, 32.

[43] J. Teixidor, *The Pagan God. Popular Religion in the Greco-Roman Near East* (Princeton 1977), 135; idem, *Pantheon*, 9, states that the educated amongst Palmyra's population were of the opinion that Bel and Baalshamin were actually the same deity. This is possible but cannot be proved. Extant epigraphic and iconographic sources distinguish the two gods.

[44] Teixidor, *Pantheon*, 9; Starcky and Gawlikowski, *Palmyre*, 101.

[45] Drijvers, "Inscriptions from Allât's Sanctuary", 111-113, pls. I-II.

[46] *SB* III, 10-11, with references to the relevant inscriptions.

[47] Gawlikowski, "Dieux de Palmyre", 2626.

The Bene Ma^{c}zin and the cult of Baalshamin and Allat

In Palmyra, the Bene Ma^{c}zin were in charge of two sanctuaries, one of Baalshamin and one of Allat. Like Baalshamin, the goddess Allat is associated several times with Bel on monuments originating outside Palmyra. The fact that the Bene Ma^{c}zin administered both temples follows from the observation that the temples of Baalshamin and Allat are interchangeable in inscriptions listing the sanctuaries of the four 'tribes' of Palmyra. The relationship of the Bene Ma^{c}zin with both sanctuaries is confirmed by the inscription from Allat's sanctuary discussed in the previous paragraph. The temple of Allat had been founded around the middle of the first century BCE on the outskirts of the Hellenistic town, and is presently situated in the western part of the city, known as 'Diocletian's Camp'.[48] The sanctuary of Baalshamin was built around 30 CE to the north of the wadi and was, like the temple of Allat, at first located outside the town. The complex is partly built on a tomb which was owned by the Bene Iedibel, a clan that belonged to the Bene Ma^{c}zin and played a prominent role in the sanctuary of Allat.[49] Owing to their joint administration, the cults of the two temples overlap. Allat is represented on an altar from the temple of Baalshamin that can be dated to the first century CE. In turn, Baalshamin and his associates Duraḫlun and Raḥim are mentioned in Allat's sanctuary.[50]

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[48] The sanctuary of Allat was thoroughly excavated several years ago. There are several preliminary reports but a final report in which all finds are listed and evaluated has not yet been published: H. J. W. Drijvers, "Das Heiligtum der arabischen Göttin Allât im westlichen Stadtteil von Palmyra", *AW* 1976. 3, 28-38; Gawlikowski, "Allat et Baalshamîn", 197-203; idem, "Le temple d'Allat à Palmyre", *RArch* 2 (1977), 253-274-; idem, "Le sanctuaire d'Allat à Palmyre. Aperçu préliminaire", *AAAS* 33 (1983), 179-198; idem, "Réflexions sur la chronologie du sanctuaire d'Allat à Palmyre", *DaM* 1 (1983), 59-67; idem, "Le premier temple d'Allat", *Resurrecting the Past. A Joint Tribute to Adnan Bounni* (eds. P. Matthiae, M. van Loon, and H. Weiss; Istanbul 1990), 101-108; idem, "Du Ḥamana au naos. Le temple palmyrénien hellénisé", *Topoi* 7.2 (1997), 837-849.

[49] This family grave was still used at the beginning of the CE: *PAT* no. 0208 (11 CE). In Palmyra, as in Greek and Roman cities, it was obligatory to bury the dead outside the city: Van Berchem, "Plan de Palmyre", 168. The earliest testimony with respect to the temple is dated 30 CE. It is unlikely that the temple and the tomb were used simultaneously: the temple was therefore probably constructed shortly before 30 CE. The prominent role of the Bene Iedibel in Allat's sanctuary is apparent from *PAT* no. 1929 (115 CE), an inscription referring to a certain Mattanai, the son of Qainu Baratia, who erected the cult statue of Allat. It follows from *PAT* no. 0208 that this Mattanai was buried in the tomb beneath the temple of Baalshamin. Cf. Dijkstra, *Life and Loyalty*, 98 and 128. In *PAT* no. 0312 (64 CE), a member of the Bene Iedibel of the Bene Ma^{c}azin is honoured for his contributions to the building of the temple of Allat. In *PAT* no. 1941 (62 CE), the goddess Allat and the Bene Nurbel honour a member of the Bene Ma^{c}zin.

The Bene Ma^{c}zin, whose settlement in Palmyra can be traced back to the middle of the second century BCE, were at least partly of Arab descent.[51] The word *Ma^{c}zin* literally means 'goatherd', an occupation which reflects the nomadic origin of some of their members.[52] The history of their two sanctuaries and the character of the deities worshipped there reflect both their Arab origin and their growing importance in Palmyra. Originally the sanctuaries of Allat and Baalshamin were humble shrines, located on the outskirts of the town, reflecting the recent settlement of the Bene Ma^{c}zin in Palmyra. By the middle of the second century CE both temples had been transformed into strongly Hellenized temples, according to the fashion of Graeco-Roman Palmyra. In due course the centre of Palmyra moved and with the construction of the Great Colonnade the temples of Allat and Baalshamin came to be spatially connected to the temple of Bel. Hence both the appearance and the location of the two sanctuaries mirror the integration of the Bene Ma^{c}zin into the city of Palmyra.

The nomadic origin of members of the Bene Ma^{c}zin is apparent from the predominantly Arab character of the deities venerated in both sanctuaries.[53] The goddess Allat is the deity most frequently attested in Safaitic inscriptions throughout Arabia until the advent of Islam.[54] Her name derives from Arabic *al-$^{\jmath}$ilâhat*, meaning 'the goddess', a clear indication of her importance. The goddess is first mentioned by Herodotus in the fifth century BCE.[55] According to the Greek historian the desert people of the Sinai worshipped two deities: Orotalt (i.e. Arabic Ruḍa, Palmyrene Arṣu) and Alilat, by whom they took oaths. In Palmyra as well as elsewhere in Roman Syria, Allat is identified with the Greek goddess Athena.[56] Numerous representations depict Allat in the guise of this Greek goddess, an identification resulting from the military character of both goddesses. Simultaneously, the image of Allat is modelled on the goddess Atargatis on account of her life-bringing and protective aspects. Another *interpretatio Graeca* exhibited by Allat's iconography concerns the goddess Nemesis.[57] Palmyrene inscriptions associate Allat with the sun god Shamash and with Raḫim, an Arab deity whose name means 'the compassionate one'.[58] Several reliefs found in Allat's sanctuary associate her with Arṣu and other gods from the Syrian steppe.[59]

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[50] Gawlikowski, "Allat et Baalshamîn", 197-203; Drijvers, "Inscriptions from Allât's Sanctuary", 115.

[51] This follows from the genealogy of the Bene Iedibel, a family belonging to the Bene Ma^{c}zin, who were buried in the tomb below the sanctuary of Baalshamin (above, note 49). Other inscriptions which testify to the early settlement of this group in Palmyra are *PAT* nos 1512 and 1516 (found in 'foundation T' in the court of the temple of Bel) and 2773 (from the so-called *monument à niches* in the court of Bel's temple).

[52] Gawlikowski, *Temple*, 38; Stark, *Personal Names*, 57 and 95.

[53] For a discussion of the deities venerated in the temple of Baalshamin - Duraḫlun, Allat, Shadrafa, Sharu, Raḥim, Du^{c}anat, the god of Soura and Malakbel - see *SB* I, 220-228. To these we can now add the goddess Belti: Drijvers, "Inscriptions from Allât's Sanctuary", 11-113, pl. I-II.

[54] F. V. Winnet and W. L. Reed, *Ancient Records from North Arabia* (with contributions by J. T. Milik and J. Starcky; Toronto 1970).

[55] Herodotus, *Histories* III, 8.

In contrast to Allat, Baalshamin was not an originally Arab deity but an ancient storm god first attested in Phoenicia in the tenth century BCE.[60] In the first century BCE Baalshamin's cult reached the Hauran, where he was much worshipped by the Nabateans.[61] His sanctuaries also functioned as centres of pilgrimage for nomadic groups inhabiting the region. Baalshamin's function as a fertility god explains his popularity with the nomadic people of the desert.[62] In all likelihood nomads coming from the west of Syria introduced his cult to Palmyra. After Baalshamin, Duraḫlun, who was associated with Baalshamin from as early as the first century CE, was the most important god worshipped in Baalshamin's sanctuary.[63] Jean Starcky has identified this deity, whose Arabic name literally means 'he of

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[56] For a general discussion of the cult of Allat in Palmyra and references for further reading: Gawlikowski, "Dieux de Palmyre", 2636-2644. On the iconography of this goddess: H. J. W. Drijvers, "De Matre inter Leones Sedente. Iconography and Character of the Arab Goddess Allât", *Hommages à M. J. Vermaseren*, vol. 1 (EPRO 68; Leiden 1978), 331-352.

[57] Above, note 28.

[58] Gawlikowski, "Allat et Baalshamîn", 198-200, fig. 2 (31/32 BCE); *PAT* no. 0301 (129 CE).

[59] Arṣu is probably amongst an - unidentified - group of deities depicted on a relief dating from the third century CE: Ruprechtsberger, *Palmyre*, 309, no. 31. Another relief dated in the first century CE pictures Arṣu together with Iarḫibol: Ruprechtsberger, *Palmyre*, 310, no. 32; *SP*, pl. 143.

[60] For a historical outline of the cult of Baalshamin: W. Röllig, "Baal-Shamem", *DDD*, cols. 283-288.

[61] For the worship of Baalshamin in the Hauran, see Sourdel, *Cultes du Hauran*, 19-31; J. Starcky, "Les inscriptions nabatéens et l'histoire de la Syrie du Sud et du Nord de la Jordanie", *Hauran I. Recherches archéologiques sur la Syrie du Sud à l'époque hellénistique et romaine* (BAH 124; ed. J.-M. Dentzer; Paris 1985), 175. His best-known cult centre is located in Sia. In the past it was frequently stated that the groundplan of this temple was similar to Baalshamin's sanctuary in Palmyra. This is not supported by the available evidence: Gawlikowski, "Arabes de Syrie", 84.

[62] H. Seyrig, "Remarques sur la civilisation de Palmyre (à propos des fragments récemment découverts)", *Syria* 21 (1940), 330; C. Ryckmans, "Le ciel et la terre dans les inscriptions safaïtiques. Ba^{c}al Shamin 'le Maître des Cieux'", *Mélanges bibliques André Robert* (Paris 1957), 354-363.

[63] Milik, *Dédicaces*, 96-98.

Raḫlûn', as a local manifestation of Baalshamin from the village of Raḫle at the foot of Mount Hermon.[64] Apparently he was introduced to Palmyra by people who had become acquainted with him there.[65]

The foundation of the temple of Baalshamin around the turn of the Common Era probably reflects a substantial increase in the number of Bene Ma^{c}zin in this period.[66] At least some of the new arrivals came from the south-west of Syria, for several of the deities venerated in the temple of Baalshamin were especially popular in this region.[67] In all probability the group was supplemented by new members well into the Common Era. These new arrivals also brought their ancestral gods along, as is demonstrated by a fragmentary bas-relief that was found in the temple of Baalshamin, dedicated to Du^{c}anat and Shadrafa. Whereas Shadrafa is a deity of West Semitic origin, Du^{c}anat is the god of the city of Anath, situated to the east of Palmyra, on the left bank of the Euphrates, about 70 kilometres south of Dura-Europos.[68] Another inscription mentions the god from Soura, a city located in the northern Euphrates region.[69] Not only were the Bene Ma^{c}zin continuously supplemented by new members, they also kept in touch with nomadic groups. The only Safaitic graffiti from Palmyra were found in the sanctuary of Allat, from which it may be inferred that the temple functioned as a place of pilgrimage for Bedouin groups passing Palmyra.[70] The popularity of Baalshamin and Allat with Arab people readily explains their popularity in the Palmyrène, the hinterland of Palmyra which was largely inhabited by people of recent nomadic origin.

Allat and Bel

By associating Allat or Baalshamin with the tutelary deities of Palmyra's city temple, the extra-Palmyrene monuments combine 'tribal' and civic religion and thereby illustrate the coexistence of the two. In the case of the goddess Allat, the connection between her sanctuary and the temple of Bel is confirmed by an architectural relief from Bel's temple which must be dated to around 80 CE.[71] A relief on the crossbar of the peristyle south of the entrance of Bel's cella depicts the well-known scene of a procession of a donkey and a camel, followed by veiled women (fig. 18).[72] Until very recently its meaning was a mystery.[73] Owing to the recent discovery in the temple of Allat of a relief that depicts a more or less identical scene, the event can now be identified as the arrival of the goddess Allat in Palmyra.[74]

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[64] Starcky, "Deux inscriptions palmyréniennes", 131, note 4.

[65] Despite the fact that Duraḫlun was a local manifestation of Baalshamin, both gods are clearly distinguished by Palmyrene inscriptions: Gawlikowski, "Dieux de Palmyre", 2630.

[66] Gawlikowski, *Temple*, 48.

[67] Cf. the criticism of Gawlikowski, "Arabes de Syrie", 84-85, on the traditional characterization of the origin of this 'tribe' which he believes is too general.

[68] *PAT* no. 0206 (3th century CE).

[69] *SB* III, 42-43, no. 30 (n.d.).

[70] The Safaitic graffiti, that have not yet been published, are mentioned by Drijvers, "Heiligtum der arabischen Göttin Allât", 34. On temples in settlements which function as places of pilgrimage for Bedouins, see J. Henninger, "La religion bédouine préislamique", *L'antica società beduina* (W. Dostal e.a. (eds.); Studi Semitici 2; Rome 1959), 115-149.

On the right-hand side of the relief at least four women are represented, entirely veiled by garments that were originally brightly coloured. Their slightly bent heads convey the impression that they are moving to the left. In front of them a camel and its driver are depicted, also marching leftwards. On its back the camel carries a small rounded tent, originally coloured red. In front of the camel driver a donkey or a small horse walks unattended; its reins trail on the ground. Above the donkey, on a second level, four men are standing. Owing to the limited space available they are about two-thirds of the size of the previous figures. The man to the right lifts his left arm in the direction of the camel. The other three figures raise their right arms and turn towards the other side of the relief. To the left of these men a group of veiled women is represented. Apart from their smaller scale they are identical to the women depicted on the right-hand side of the relief. The figures depicted at ground level beneath this group are heavily damaged and can scarcely be identified. In front of the mule the outlines of a kneeling figure, depicted in profile, are still discernible: the object of veneration is almost entirely lost. Faint traces convey the impression of a cult statue, but this identification is tentative.

With respect to its style, composition and subject matter, the relief has certain characteristics that are unique in the art of Palmyra. In spite of its dating to around 80 CE, the veiled women and the kneeling figure who are depicted in profile give the relief an archaic flavour reminiscent of Palmyrene sculpture from the first century BCE.[75] The composition of the scene on two levels, a device resulting from the wish to represent two subsequent events in a narrative and used in order to separate the two scenes, is highly unusual in Palmyra.[76]. The men depicted on the second level above the donkey actually represent two groups of spectators. The figure on the extreme right is turned towards the procession with the camel, while his companions regard the event depicted beneath their feet on the left-hand side of the relief. The same holds true for the veiled women; the group on the right part of the relief attends the procession with the camel; the group depicted in the upper left corner accompanies the event depicted at ground level.[77] The fact that the relief represents two events means that we are dealing with a cyclic or continuous representation, a technique that re-occurs about two hundred years later in the synagogue paintings from Dura-Europos, but is the only example of this method of pictorial representation from Palmyra known so far.[78]

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[71] This date results from the revised building history of the sanctuary. Cf. above, Chapter II, 52-53.

[72] Seyrig, *Temple de Bêl*, 89-90, pl. 42, Album 91 and 143; *SP*, pls. 42-44.

[73] *TMP*, 233, relates the scene to the foundation of the sanctuary of Arṣu. Seyrig, "Dieux armés", 91, opts for the arrival of the god Baalshamin. In *Temple de Bêl*, 89, the same author proposes the foundation of the sanctuary of Arṣu. He falsely substantiates his interpretation with a reference to Schlumberger, "Quatre tribus", 129-131. Schlumberger interprets the relief as the installation of the four 'tribes' in Palmyra.

[74] This section presents a slightly revised version of my article "The Arrival of the Arab Goddess Allat in Palmyra", *Mesopotamia* 33 (1998), 297-308.

[75] H. Seyrig, "Sculptures palmyréniennes archaïques", *Syria* 22 (1941), 31-33.

A new light is thrown on the interpretation of this scene by a fragmentary relief from Allat's temple. It is a two-sided relief which probably served as some sort of architectural element (pl. XIX). One side pictures a group of veiled women following a camel, a representation that is more or less identical to the right-hand part of the relief from the temple of Bel.[79] The reverse pictures what may be a cult statue, which is placed on a wagon.[80] The relief from the temple of Allat is older than the relief from the temple of Bel, for it is made of soft yellow limestone, typical of Palmyrene sculpture dating from the first century BCE and the beginning of the first century CE.[81] As the sculptures from the peristyle of Bel's temple can be dated around 80 CE, the earlier date of the relief from the temple of Allat opens up the possibility that the relief from the temple of Bel was copied from it.

The early date of the original not only explains the archaic style of the relief from Bel's temple, but also helps to explain its peculiar composition. Despite the fragmentary state of the relief from the temple of Allat, it is clear that the two scenes to have survived are part of a larger monument. Whereas the veiled women have an exact counterpart on the relief from the temple of Bel, the cult statue on the wagon is not to be found here. Instead, the right-hand part of the relief from the temple of Bel depicts an event that has been tentatively identified as the adoration of a cult statue, a conclusion that is supported by the possible representation of a cult statue on the fragmentary relief from Allat's sanctuary. This implies that three scenes of the total narrative cycle have been preserved. Given the fact that the monument from the temple of Allat must have been larger, it seems probable that the event depicted on the left-hand side of the relief from the temple of Bel was represented here as well. Thus the relief from the temple of Bel copies two scenes from a more extensive narrative cycle originating in the temple of Allat. The hypothesis that we are dealing with an abbreviated narrative cycle accords well with the composition of the scene in two levels, as this device is frequently used to condense individual scenes in order to fit them into one picture.[82]

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[76] The only other example is provided by a fragmentary relief from the peristyle of Bel's temple: Colledge, *Art of Palmyra*, 128-129, fig. 16.

[77] Schlumberger, "Quatre tribus", 130.

[78] *TEAD Synagogue*, 385-390.

[79] Ruprechtsberger (ed.), *Palmyra*, 314, no. 37; *SP*, pl. 156.

[80] *SP*, pl. 155. The relief is described in Ruprechtsberger, *Palmyra*, 314. no. 37. Compare also Gawlikowski, "Du Ḥamana au naos", *Topoi* 7.2 (1997), 844.

[81] H. Seyrig, "Ornamenta Palmyrena antiquiora", *Syria* 21 (1940), 281.

The character of the depicted event is distinctively Arab and this fits well with the origin of Allat and her adherents. The small red tent carried by the camel is a *qubba*, a portable shrine used by Arab people to transport betyls or other sacred objects.[83] Henry Seyrig suggests that the unattended donkey guides the procession of the camel. It is a well-known topos in ancient and Islamic literature that an animal functions as a divine medium, pointing out the places where the gods choose to establish sanctuaries or cities.[84] The veiled women confirm the religious character of the happening.[85] It may be inferred from the building history of Allat's sanctuary that great importance was attached to the original location of her shrine. The ancient *ḥamana* or chapel was incorporated in the new cella that was consecrated around 148 CE.[86] This accords well with the divine endorsement of the place, exemplified on the relief by the unattended donkey. The scene that follows appears to be centred upon a cult statue. Provided that the first scene does indeed depict the arrival of the goddess, the second scene may very well show the investiture of Allat's cult statue, an identification confirmed by an inscription found in the proximity of Allat's temple. It is the dedication of an altar by a certain

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[82] For the different devices that are used in order to abbreviate narrative cycles, see K. Weitzmann, “Narration in Early Christendom”, *AJA* 61 (1957), 88-89. Weitzmann bases his theory upon the changes that occur when manuscript illustrations are used for monumental representations, but the same mechanisms apply elsewhere: H. Frankfort, *The Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient* (4th edition, London 1970).

[83] H. Lammens, “Le culte des bétyles et les processions religieuses chez les Arabes préislamites”, *L'arabie occidentale avant l'hégire* (Beirut 1928), 127-128; J.-M. Dentzer, “Naiskoi du Hauran et qubbah Arabe”, *Petra and the Caravan Cities* (ed. F. Zayadine; Amman 1990), 209, for other instances of the *qobba* in Palmyra and its surroundings.

[84] Seyrig, “Bas-reliefs monumentaux”, 165, cites several examples.

[85] On the veil of women in the Near East and Palmyra see R. de Vaux, “Sur le voile des femmes dans l'Orient Ancien”, *RB* 44 (1935), 408; Will, *Palmyréniens*, 109-110. For the role of women in religious processions: Lammens, “Culte des bétyles”, 112-116.

[86] Drijvers, “Aramaic ḤMNᵓ and Hebrew ḤMN”, 173.

Gaddarṣu to the 'lady of the temple' (Allat) in 115 CE.[87] The dedicant refers to his ancestor, Mattanai, the son of Qainu Baratai the Great, who erected the 'statue' (*mṣbʾ*) of the 'lady of the temple'. This Mattanai must have lived around the middle of the first century BCE, for he is mentioned as Wahballat's great-grandfather in the funerary inscription of the tomb beneath the temple of Baalshamin, dated 11 CE.[88] The fact that the inauguration of this cult statue was still remembered almost two hundred years later implies that it was perceived as a major event in the cult of the goddess. It therefore seems reasonable to suppose that this event was commemorated in the decoration of her temple, which was in turn copied in the temple of Bel.

The representation of Allat's arrival in Palmyra on a relief from the temple of Bel may imply that Bel was thought to be involved in this event, a hypothesis supported by a tessera issued by Allat's priests on the occasion of a common festival of Allat and Bel.[89] Side *a* reads *ʾgn bl bny nwrbl*, 'symposion of Bel, [organized by] the Bene Nurbel'; side *b* depicts a scene reminiscent of the scene depicted in Bel's temple.[90] Allat is shown enthroned, flanked by a lion. In front of her, a camel marches to the right, its large hump suggesting that the animal is carrying something on its back, possibly a *qubba*. A bird perches on the outstretched left arm of the goddess. In all probability this is an eagle, a bird that frequently occurs in Palmyrene representations and may be explained in a number of ways, depending on its specific context. An eagle is depicted on the lintel of the cult niche of the temple of Bel, where it is a symbolical representation of the tutelary deity of the sanctuary (fig. 15). In view of Bel's name on the other side of this tessera, the eagle is best explained as a reference to Bel, in which case Allat's association with the bird visualizes her reunion with Bel.[91] The loaded camel reminds one of the animal on the relief from Bel's temple. By analogy with its function in the latter representation we may suppose that the camel is taking part in a religious procession in which Allat is carried to the temple of Bel. Gawlikowski suggested long ago that processions between the temple of Allat and the temple of Bel were held along the Great Colonnade, and the present tessera may very well allude to such a ritual.[92]

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[87] *PAT* no. 1929 (115 CE). For a reconstruction of Allat's cult statue (instead of the usual cult relief), see Gawlikowski, "Du Ḥamana au naos", 842-845.

[88] *PAT* no. 0208 (11 CE). For the reconstruction of the genealogy of *PAT* no. 1929 see Dijkstra, *Life and Loyalty*, 123-124.

[89] *RTP* no. 123.

[90] Compare the similar representation on *RTP* no. 165. Face *a* depicts a lion and the legend Allat. On face *b* is a reclining camel, accompanied by the Bel-sign and the legend 'Bene Nurbel'. On the functioning of the Bene Nurbel as the priests of Allat, see Milik, *Dédicaces*, 81-82.

[91] An interesting parallel is provided by the famous relief representing a goddess with a dog (pl. XIX). On this relief the eagle is seated on the back of the throne of the goddess: E. Will, "La déesse au chien de Palmyre", *Syria* 62 (1985), 49-55, with references to earlier literature. For the eagle as a symbolic representation of Bel, see *op. cit.*, 254.

Allat's arrival in Palmyra and her procession to Bel's temple may be interpreted as related events in which her reunion with Bel can be taken as the ritual re-enactment of her arrival, the time at which she was officially received into the city. This hypothesis is supported by a relief from Hatra which pictures Hatra's welcome to the arriving goddess Allat.[93] The piece was found in the small southern *iwan* of the so-called building B in Hatra's Great Sanctuary. Epigraphic material indicates that the construction of Allat's *iwan* was started by the Hatrene king Sanatruq I soon after the middle of the second century CE.[94] Allat is shown enthroned upon the back of a dromedary moving to the right, preceded by a tambourine-player and a flying putto. A reclining nymph, enveloped by the coils of a reptile on which perches an eagle with outstreched wings, receives the goddess and offers her a large pair of scales. Invernizzi convincingly proposes that the nymph should be identified as the source of Hatra, and the eagle as Maren, the city god.[95] A second relief from the same room shows the goddess enthroned in her sanctuary, worshipped by King Sanatruq, the founder of her *iwan*.[96] Hence the decoration of Allat's *iwan* illustrates Allat's investiture in Hatra by the religious and political authorities of the city. The relief from the temple of Bel representing Allat's arrival in Palmyra may be explained along similar lines.

Malakbel and Bel

On several monuments from the Palmyrène the god Malakbel is among Bel's associates. Together with his companion Aglibol this god was worshipped in the 'Sacred Wood', the sanctuary administered by the Bene Komare. The relationship between the Bene Komare and this sanctuary has been discussed extensively in the previous chapter. The Bene Komare were an old and important Palmyrene clan and the fact that several of them played a crucial role in the rebuilding of Bel's temple explains why their ancestral deity Aglibol was chosen as one of Bel's attendants. Although Aglibol lost his ancestral connotation in the triad of Bel, the god continued to be worshipped with Malakbel in his 'tribal' sanctuary.

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[92] Gawlikowski, *Temple*, 80-86; idem, "Dieux de Palmyre", 2651.

[93] Invernizzi, "Investiture of Nemesis-Allat", 129-175.

[94] H. al-Najafi, "The Inscriptions from Hatra", *Sumer* 39 (1983), 200-204 (Arabic section). For the inscriptions related to the building history of the *iwan*, see Invernizzi, "Investiture of Nemesis-Allat", 132, note 132, and Dijkstra, *Life and Loyalty*, 200-202.

[95] Invernizzi, "Investiture of Nemesis-Allat", 159

[96] *op. cit.*, figs. B and 64.

Like the cult in the sanctuary of Allat, the ancestral cult of the Bene Komare is connected with the temple of Bel. The reverse side of the cross-beam representing the arrival of the goddess Allat in Palmyra depicts Aglibol and Malakbel in their sanctuary (fig. 17). Almost identical representations of the two gods have been found in the Palmyrène and in Rome (pls. XVI, XVII). In contrast to the representations from Rome and the Palmyrène, the relief from Bel's temple depicts an eagle with outstretched wings above the altar that stands between the two deities. In view of the position of the relief in the peristyle of Bel's temple, the eagle is best explained as a reference to Bel, the tutelary deity of the temple for which the relief was designed. A similar bird is depicted on the lintel of the cult niche, where it symbolizes the tutelary deity of the sanctuary. The eagle thus exemplifies the subordinate position of the sanctuary of Aglibol and Malakbel in relation to the temple of Bel.[97]

Two of the reliefs which decorated the peristyle of Bel's cella are related to important Palmyrene sanctuaries. Only a small number of the reliefs that originally decorated the peristyle have been preserved, but it can be safely assumed that other Palmyrene temples were also represented here. Thus the concept that the temple of Bel was the sanctuary of all Palmyrenes is made explicit by representing the important sanctuaries of the 'tribes' or neighbourhoods of the city around the cella of the great god. Moreover, the decoration of the temple note only illustrates the simultaneous existence of 'tribal' and civic religion in the oasis, but through the presence of these temples around the cella, it proclaims the predominance of Bel's sanctuary over the other Palmyrene temples. Furthermore, the supremacy of the city temple is not only apparent from the decoration of the temple, but has a counterpart in the cultic organization of Palmyra. The relief representing the arrival of the goddess Allat in Palmyra was identified as a legendary and ritual event connecting the temple of the Arab goddess with the sanctuary of Bel. It therefore is reasonable to suppose that other 'tribal' sanctuaries were also ritually connected to Bel's temple.

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[97] *TMP*, 188. Others have interpreted the eagle as a device to put the scene in a cosmic framework: Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra*, 10. The interpretation proposed by Du Mesnil du Buisson is supported by the Hatrene relief representing the arrival of Allat in Hatra, which was found in the *iwan* dedicated to this goddess. As on the Hatrene relief, the eagle symbolizes Hatra's city god, Maren: Invernizzi, "Investiture of Nemesis-Allat", 158-159, figs. 63 and 65.

Both the decoration of the peristyle of Bel's cella and the religious organization in Palmyra remind one of the configuration of deities depicted on monuments that were found outside the oasis. By associating the tutelary deities of Palmyra's civic sanctuary with the most prominent 'tribal' deities, these monuments testify to the coexistence of civic and 'tribal' religion and exemplify the predominance of Palmyra's municipal cult over the other deities worshipped in the oasis.

The Bene Mattabol and the cult of Arşu

Monuments from Dura-Europos frequently associate the god Arşu with Bel. Apparently Arşu was thought to entertain a special relationship with the city god of Palmyra but, unfortunately, no Palmyrene monuments have been preserved that enable us to define this relationship. There is only one Palmyrene relief on which Arşu is associated with Bel's triad, and although it originates from the temple of Bel, there is no evidence from which it may be inferred that the worship of Arşu took place in this temple on a permanent basis.[98] He is never mentioned in the inscriptions enumerating the tutelary deities of Bel's temple, and although a great many Palmyrene deities are associated with Bel on the tesserae, none mention Bel and Arşu together.[99] Palmyrene inscriptions list the sanctuary of Arşu (Ares in Greek inscriptions) as the temple of one of the four 'tribes' of Palmyra.[100] The position of Arşu in Palmyra thus tallies with the other deities who are frequently associated with Bel on monuments that were found outside Palmyra. By analogy with the status of these other deities, it may be presumed that the functioning of the temple of Arşu as the sanctuary of one of the four 'tribes' explains his affiliation with Bel on the monuments from Dura-Europos.

The sanctuary of Arşu was known to have existed from the inscriptions listing the four sanctuaries. Only recently, however, was it discovered where this sanctuary was located and which 'tribe' administered the temple. At the eastern side of the wadi archaeologists found an altar dedicated in 63 CE by a member of the Bene Mattabol to Arṣu, Qismaya and the daughters of El.[101] Excavations showed the sanctuary to be located nearby.[102] Unfortunately, the results of these archaeological explorations have not yet been published, but the dedication of the altar by a member of the Bene Mattabol implies that they were in charge of this sanctuary.[103] This affiliation was strong and long-lasting; honorific inscriptions from the Great Colonnade show that the sanctuary of Arṣu was connected with the Bene Mattabol as late as 279-280 CE, seven years after Aurelian's troops conquered the city.[104]

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[98] Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra*, pl. VII.

[99] *RTP* no. 197, representing Arşu, has a legend which was read *ʾrṣwbl*, 'Arṣubel', by the editors of *RTP*. According to *RTP*, 181, this is a composite name, composed of Arşu and Bel; cf. the divine name Malakbel. By analogy with *RTP* nos. 180, 184, 190, and 196, Milik, *Dédicaces*, 49, proposes to read *ʾrṣw rb[ʾ]*, 'Arşu the great'. Given the fact that the tessera provides the only instance of the name Arṣubel, Milik's reading is to be preferred.

[100] Cf. above, notes 29 and 30.

The Bene Mattabol are first attested in a Palmyrene inscription dated in 9 CE.[105] As early as the beginning of the Common Era they were a prominent Palmyrene clan involved in the caravan trade with the East, one of whose members contributed to the construction of the temple of Bel.[106] Mattabol is a typical Palmyrene name meaning 'gift of Bol', but despite their indigenous name, most members of the clan appear to have been of Arab descent.[107] This may imply that Arab groups joined an indigenous Palmyrene group, or that the ancestor of the Bene Mattabol adopted the name when he settled in the oasis.[108]

The Arab ancestry of the Bene Mattabol is apparent from the origin of Arṣu and the deities who are associated with him in his sanctuary. Arṣu is the Aramaicized transcription of the name of the Arab deity Ruda (*rḍw*, *rḍ*, *rḍʾ*), 'the favourable one', a god frequently attested in Thamudic and Safaitic inscriptions.[109] A graffito from the temple of the Palmyrene gods in Dura-Europos renders the name of the god *rṣʾ*, a spelling which remind one of Arṣu's Arabic name.[110] The god is first attested as Ruldaiu in the annals of Sennacherib (704-781 BCE), and is called Orotalt by Herodotus.[111] According to the Greek historian the nomads of the Sinai worshipped two deities, Orotalt and Alilat, whom he equates with Dionysos and Urania respectively. The name of Arşu's associate Qismaya is likewise an Aramaicized form of an Arabic name. The name of this god, which is attested here for the first time, in all likelihood derives from Arabic *qisma*, 'destiny'; its Aramaic form means 'the one in charge of destiny'.[112] The 'daughters of El', who are associated with Arşu and Qismaya in the inscription on the altar from the god's sanctuary, are to be identified with al-Lat, al-Uzza and Manat, the three supreme Arab goddesses mentioned by the Quran.[113]

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[101] *PAT* no. 0992; K. Asᶜad and J. Teixidor, "Un culte arabe préislamique à Palmyre d'après une inscription inédite", *CRAI* 1985, 286-293; Dijkstra, *Life and Loyalty*, 98-99.

[102] E. Will, "Le développement urbain de Palmyre: témoignages épigraphiques anciens et nouveaux", *Syria* 60 (1983), 76, note 17 and fig. 3.

[103] This was already postulated by Milik, *Dédicaces*, 29, on account of *PAT* no. 0321 (n.d.), a dedication by a member of the Bene Mattabol to Arṣu, and the frequency with which Arṣu serves as a theophoric element in the personal names of individuals belonging to this 'tribe'.

[104] This may be inferred from honorific inscriptions that probably originate from the Great Colonnade: Asᶜad and Gawlikowski, "New Honorific Inscriptions", 164-168, nos 1-8. Nos. 7 and 8 are dated 279-280 CE.

[105] *PAT* no. 0461. On this 'tribe', see Teixidor, "Nomadisme et sédentarisation", 53-55; Dijkstra, *Life and Loyalty*, 98-100.

[106] *PAT* nos. 0270 (19 CE) and 1353 (24 CE).

[107] Stark, *Personal Names*, 98; Asᶜad and Teixidor, "Culte arabe préislamique", 291.

[108] Gawlikowski, *Temple*, 39. In Palmyrene inscriptions the name is attested three times as a personal name: *PAT* nos. 0734 (n.d.), 1501 (n.d.), and 1603 (n.d.).

[109] Starcky, *DBSup* VII, 991; idem, "Relief dédié au dieu Muᶜnîm", *Semitica* 22 (1972), 62; Milik, *Dédicaces*, 49.

[110] Cf. the discussion of inscription no. 50 in the appendix.

The altar dedicated to Arşu and his associates bears the date 63 CE. It is certain, however, that the temple of Arşu was founded well before the Common Era: the antiquity of his cult is apparent from the sanctuary's location to the south-east of the wadi. In the first century CE the cult of this god was firmly rooted in the city, as may be inferred from both the great number of Palmyrene personal names that contain Arşu as a theophoric element and the Romanized iconography of the god at the beginning of the Common Era, when he is depicted wearing the Roman cuirass and can be identified by means of his clock-shaped helmet and small round shield. The military cuirass is the characteristic dress of important Palmyrene deities from the first century onwards: the god's clothing therefore mirrors his assimilation into the urban environment.[114] In this respect Arşu's appearance tallies with the Aramaic name of the Arab groups that administered his sanctuary.

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[111] *ANET* 1950, 291; Herodotus, *Histories* III, 8.

[112] Thus As^{c}ad and Teixidor, "Culte arabe préislamique", 288-289. According to them, the word derives from Arabic *qasama*, 'divide', which in turn derives from *qisma*, 'part, portion, destiny'. Followed by the suffix *ay*, Qismaya literally means 'the one related to destiny'. Caquot, *op. cit.*, 292, notes that the word is not necessarily Arabic since the same root is attested in Aramaic. In Palmyrene the substantive *qsm* is normally translated 'divination'. Milik, *Dédicaces*, 280, proposes the translation 'distribution'. Dijkstra, *Life and Loyalty*, 98, note 2, notes the possibility that *qsmy*$^{\supset}$ is a composite name retaining Edomite *qs* or *qws*. However, the translation proposed by Teixidor is most likely. Cf. *DNWSI* "qsm".

[113] As^{c}ad and Teixidor, "Culte arabe préislamique", 289. The three goddesses were worshipped in central Arabia, in Medina and Mecca. Their cult is described in a work from the tenth century CE by Ibn-al-Kalbi: N. A. Faris, *The Book of Idols. Being a Translation of the Kitab Al-Asnam by Hisam Ibn-Al-Kalbi* (Princeton 1952), pars. 13-27 (pp. 12-23). They are likewise attested in inscriptions from ancient Tumna, (present Hajar Kuḥlân) and San^{c}a in South Arabia: J. Ryckmans, "^{c}Uzza et Lât dans les inscriptions sud arabes: A propos de deux amulettes méconnues", *JSS* 25 (1980), 193-204. Arşu is associated with the same three deities on *RTP* no. 196. Face *a* shows Arşu, face *b* three goddesses, identified in *TMP*, 246, as the three daughters of Allah mentioned in the Quran.

[114] On the iconography of Arşu, see P. Linant de Bellefonds, "Arsu", *LIMC* II.1 (1984), 615-618; *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 195-199.

Arṣu and Bel

The reliefs which decorated the peristyle around the cella of Bel represent the most important sanctuaries of the city, *inter alia* the temples of two of the four 'tribes', the sanctuary of Allat and the 'Sacred Wood'. In view of the eminent position of Arṣu's sanctuary in Palmyra, it is probable that it was also represented in the peristyle, but unfortunately none of the extant fragments of the remaining reliefs can be connected with his temple. Although it was stated above that the association of 'tribal' deities with Bel has a counterpart in the ritual organization of Palmyra, there is no Palmyrene evidence that unequivocally testifies to a connection between the temple of Bel and the temple of Arṣu.

The only instance that does testify to such a ritual connection is provided by a relief which was recently found in Dura-Europos (pl. X).[115] According to the Palmyrene inscription, it was dedicated to Bel in 173-174 CE. In the centre is a priest carrying two standards topped by statues of military deities. The dedicant of the relief is represented on the right-hand side of the relief; on the left-hand side a small temple is represented with a small figure standing in its door. The fronton above the entrance depicts a figure enthroned between two lions, iconography characteristic of Atargatis, the goddess of Hierapolis; in Palmyra it is used for several goddesses. In view of the dedication of the monument to Bel, the city god of Palmyra, this deity probably has to be identified as Astarte-Gad Tadmor. Presumably, therefore, the small temple was also consecrated to the city god of Palmyra.

Despite the fact that the monument is dedicated to Bel and in all likelihood depicts a temple consecrated to this god, the priest and the deities on the standards do not belong to Bel's cycle. By analogy with representations on Palmyrene tesserae, the central figure can be identified as a priest of Arṣu. We know of several Palmyrene monuments representing a deity other than the one to whom the object is dedicated: a terracotta medallion, for instance, depicts the moon god Aglibol but is dedicated to Baalshamin.[116] Another ex-voto to Baalshamin represents a lion, an animal frequently associated with Allat, in front of a square column.[117] The ritual connection of both Aglibol and Allat with the god Baalshamin is well known and explains the dedication of these two representations to Baalshamin. By analogy, we may suppose that the relief from Dura-Europos testifies to a connection between the cults of Arṣu and Bel.

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[115] Cf. the extensive description of this relief in the appendix, below 279-282.

[116] Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra*, pl. XVII; *PAT* no. 2626 (n.d.).

[117] Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra*, pl. XXVII; *PAT* no. 1727 (216 CE). On the lion in the cult of Allat, see Drijvers, "Matre inter Leones Sedente", 331-352.

On the basis of the available material it is impossible to establish the exact nature of the event depicted by the Durene relief. This monument and the Palmyrene tesserae are the only examples representing standards topped by statues of deities. The closest parallel is provided by a ceiling slab from Bel's temple, representing a winged spirit carrying a standard crowned by a cuirassed torso.[118] Far more common are standards which contain one or several symbols of deities. These cult implements are attested throughout Syria and Mesopotamia and have a long history in this area.[119] Best known is the description of the so-called *semeion* in the temple of the Syrian goddess at Hierapolis in *De Syria Dea*, a work dating from the second century CE.[120] We are told that this image differed from the conventional cult statues of deities; it did not have its own particular character, but bore the qualities of the other gods. Figural representations of the gods of Hierapolis confirm this description. *Semeia* were also popular in Hatra.[121] Hatrene inscriptions show that as cult objects these items were considered to be representatives of the gods. The most extensive description of the objects' function is provided by *De Syria Dea*, in which we are told that the standards were used for processions and to accompany travellers on their journey.[122] As the representatives of one or several gods, they guaranteed their presence and thereby provided divine protection. Although the divine statues on the standards depicted on the Durene relief differ from the symbolic *semeia*, it is very probable that the event pictured is likewise of a processional character. This is supported by the fact that the priest carrying the standards is depicted in front of a temple. We do not know whether the Durene relief shows a unique event in the religious history of this temple, but with regard to Palmyra, it follows from the manifold tesserae representing this ritual that it was not a sole performance, but a recurring event in the cult of Arṣu.

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[118] Seyrig, *Temple de Bêl*, pl. 50, fig. 143; *SP*, pls. 54 and 55.

[119] For an enumeration of the available material: W. Fauth, "Simia", PWSup 14, (1974), cols. 679-701; J. Tubach, *Im schatten des Sonnengottes. Der Sonnenkult in Edessa, Ḥarrân und Ḥaṭrâ am Vorabend der christlichen Mission* (Wiesbaden 1986), 184-209. On the history of this cult instrument: H. Seyrig, "Les dieux de Hiérapolis", *Syria* 37 (1960), 233-251. Cf. the standards (*šurinnu*) of Mesopotamian gods: J. Black and A. Green, *Gods Demons and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia. An illustrated Dictionary* (London 1992), 169.

[120] *DSD* par. 33. Greek text and English translation: H. W. Attridge and R. A. Oden (eds.), *The Syrian Goddess (De Dea Syria)* (SBLTT Graeco-Roman Religion Series 9; Missoula 1976), 44-45.

[121] S. B. Downey, "A Preliminary Corpus of the Standards of Hatra", *Sumer* 26 (1970), 195-225.

[122] *DSD* par. 33, in which we are told that the *semeion* accompanied the procession to the sea. In *DSD* par. 49, we are told that groups of pilgrims that visited Hierapolis brought along their own *semeia*.

The deities represented on the two standards are in all likelihood Arṣu and Allat. The association of these two gods, which is reminiscent of Herodotus' account of the religion of the Sinai Bedouins in the fourth century BCE,[123] is supported by material from Palmyra. Arṣu is represented on two reliefs that were found in Allat's sanctuary, and his relationship with Allat is confirmed by his image on a tessera which also pictures a griffin, the animal of the goddess Nemesis, who was equated with Allat in Palmyra.[124] Most significant, however, is the association of Arṣu with the 'daughters of El' on the altar from his sanctuary discussed above. One of El's daughters can be identified as the goddess Allat: hence the representation on the relief from Dura-Europos tallies with the cultic organization of Arṣu's sanctuary in Palmyra. The relief from Dura depicts a priest of Arṣu in front of a temple dedicated to Bel, illustrating a ritual concerning Arṣu and Bel which probably had a counterpart in the religious organization of Palmyra.

Character and function of Arṣu in Palmyra

By analogy with the 'tribal' background of the other deities that are associated with Bel on monuments which were found outside Palmyra, Arṣu's affiliation with Bel on monuments from Dura-Europos may be explained by his role as patron deity of one of the four sanctuaries of the city. Hence Arṣu's association with Bel on monuments from Dura-Europos testifies to the joint worship of civic and 'tribal' deities. It is possible that the dedicants of the Durene monuments were affiliated with the Bene Mattabol. However, as the deity of one of the sanctuaries of the four quarters of the city, the god acquired a semi-municipal status, so that although Arṣu's sanctuary was administered by one 'tribe', his cult was not necessarily restricted to people from that neighbourhood. Hence Arṣu's character and function in Palmyra may have contributed to his popularity in Dura-Europos.

Originally, Arṣu was one of the many warrior gods who were much worshipped by the nomadic people from the Syrian desert.[125] Notwithstanding Arṣu's civic appearance on Palmyrene monuments, certain features of the god still allude to his Arab origin. On a great many monuments, for instance, Arṣu carries a small round shield and is accompanied by a camel, features characteristic of warrior gods of the desert.[126] A relief found in the wall of an arch in the temple of Bel pictures Arṣu with Azizu, an Arab deity whose name means 'the strong one'. The relief is dedicated by a priest of Azizu to Arṣu and Azizu, 'the good and rewarding gods', and is probably dated 113 CE.[127] Arṣu is mounted on a camel, whereas Azizu is depicted riding a horse.[128] They turn towards the dedicant, who is depicted standing beside an altar on the left-hand side of the relief. It is frequently assumed that Arṣu and Azizu were jointly worshipped in the sanctuary of Arṣu and enjoyed great popularity in Palmyra. This, however, is far from certain. The present relief, which is the only Palmyrene monument on which the two deities are associated, was found in the temple of Bel instead of Arṣu's temple and does not therefore necessarily mirror the cult in Arṣu's sanctuary.[129] Conspicuously, Azizu is not associated with Arṣu in the inscription on the altar from his temple. Moreover, the dedicant of the relief explicitly identifies himself as a priest of Azizu, which is difficult to reconcile with the hypothesis that the pair were at home in Arṣu's sanctuary.

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[123] Herodotus, *Histories* III, 8.

[124] *RTP* no. 194. For the two reliefs, see above, note 59.

[125] *PNO*, 124-128; P. Linant de Bellefonds, "Les divinités 'bédouines' du désert syrien et leur iconographie", *Petra and the Caravan Cities* (ed. F. Zayadine; Amman 1990), 169-183.

By analogy with the religious situation in Edessa, it is frequently assumed that the cult of Arṣu and Azizu in Palmyra was of an astrological character.[130] In Edessa we encounter the pairing of Azizos and Monimos. The name Monimos, the Greek form of Arabic Mun^{c}îm, derives from the root *n^{c}m*, 'to be pleasing', and has the meaning 'the favourable one'. This is an exact equivalent of the name Arṣu, which derives from the root *rṣ*ʾ, 'to be pleasing', and likewise means 'the favourable one'.[131] According to Emperor Julian's oration on King Helios, the inhabitants of Edessa worshipped the sun, flanked by Azizos and Monimos.

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[126] Seyrig, "Dieux armés", 87. The camel is associated with Arṣu on *RTP* nos. 177, 185, 186. A relief from the sanctuary of Allat pictures Arṣu leading a camel together with Iarḥibol: Ruprechtsberger, *Palmyre*, 310, no. 32 (the identification of the deities in the commentary is wrong). Arṣu is depicted riding a camel on the relief which pictures him with Azizu, cf. the following note.

[127] *Drijvers, Religion of Palmyra*, pl. LXVII,1; *PAT* 0320. The date of the relief is problematic; Dijkstra, *Life and Loyalty*, 100, for a discussion of the various possibilities, references, and the arguments in favour of the date 113 CE.

[128] Seyrig, "Dieux armés", 87, fig. 4; Teixidor, *Pantheon*, 69-70, pl. XXI. 1. Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra*, pl. LXVIII,1.

[129] In the past the two small statues of deities on standards that are depicted on several Palmyrene tesserae were frequently identified as Arṣu and Azizu. Cf. note 327 in the appendix. However, it may be inferred from the recently found Palmyrene relief from Dura-Europos that the two gods are probably to be identified as Arṣu and Allat. Cf. above, 93.

[130] Drijvers, *Edessa*, 146-174, with references. Cf. below, note 134.

[131] Starcky, "Relief dédié au dieu Mun^{c}îm", 59-60 and 62; Drijvers, *Edessa*, 161.

Following the Phoenician theologian Iamblichus, Julian states that Azizos was identified with Ares and Monimos with Hermes. They were thought to belong to the immediate entourage of Helios.[132] Further on, Julian notes that Azizos goes before Helios in the procession.[133] This alludes to Azizos' identity as the morning star, and points to his identification with the planet Venus. Since Azizos is the morning star, it is assumed that Monimos is the evening star: hence the two gods are considered the two hypostases of a male Venus deity.[134] Since Monimos is etymologically the equivalent of Arṣu, and Arṣu is associated with Azizu, the Palmyrene god Arṣu is conventionally connected with the evening star.[135]

The situation in Edessa cannot, though, be used to explain the situation in Palmyra: the fact that Monimos and Arṣu are identical from an etymological point of view does not imply that they represent the same deity. The cult of Monimos is not attested in Palmyra, and although a relief dedicated to this god was found in the Palmyrène the monument was not produced in Palmyra.[136] What is more, Monimos rides a horse, thereby deviating from the traditional iconography of Arṣu. As the situation in Palmyra clearly differed from that of Edessa, there is no ground for the assumption that Arṣu had astrological connotations here.[137]

Compared to material from the Palmyrène, Arṣu and Azizu are one of many divine pairs of cameleers or horsemen who were popular with people of recent nomadic origin living in this region. These gods are known under different names and appear in different combinations. It is difficult to believe that they all represent an aspect of the planet Venus, irrespective of each one's exact name and the identity of his partner.[138] Instead, it is far more plausible to deduce their function from their iconography. Their riding animals and military outfits reflect their main function: the escort and protection of caravans and travellers in the desert.[139] In all probability the Palmyrene relief representing Arşu and Azizu has to be explained along similar lines.

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[132] W. C. Wright, *Julian*, vol. 1 (The Loeb Classical Library; London 1913), 413. Wright reads Emesa instead of Edessa. This correction is not necessary; cf. Drijvers, *Edessa*, 147-150.

[133] Wright, *Julian*, 421-423.

[134] J. Henninger, "Zum Problem der Venussterngottheit bei den Semiten", *Anthropos* 71 (1971), 129-168; W. Heimpel, "A Catalog of Near Eastern Venus Deities", *SMS* 3.4 (1982), 18-20.

[135] Drijvers, *Edessa*, 166-168.

[136] *PAT* no. 2625 (138 CE); Starcky, "Relief dédié au dieu Munᶜîm", 57-65.

[137] H. J. W. Drijvers, "The Cult of Azizos and Monimos at Edessa", *Ex orbe religionum. Studia Geo Widengren oblata* (Leiden 1972), 355-371. However, the same author does subscribe to the equation of the two gods with the planet Venus in a later study: *Edessa*, 167-169.

[138] The only possible proof that these deities function in a cosmic setting is provided by a relief representing Abgal and Ashar from Khirbet Semrine in the Palmyrène; *PNO*, 56, pl. XXII; Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra*, pl. LXIII, 2. Since this is the only instance on which astral symbols are connected with rider-gods no general conclusions can be drawn from this relief.

[139] Linant de Bellefonds, "Divinités 'bédouines' du désert syrien", 169.

The bilingual inscriptions listing the four sanctuaries refer to the temple of Arşu as ἱερὸν Ἄρες.[140] Arşu's identification with Ares probably results from the homophony of the Greek and the Aramaic name and the military character of both deities.[141] Hence this *interpretatio Graeca* emphasizes Arşu's role as the military guardian of travellers in the desert. There are no grounds to assume that this equation had astrological significance. Instead, it may be compared to the identification of Allat with Athena. Like Allat, Arşu is shown in different forms, each accentuating a different aspect of his personality. In addition to his belligerent features, the god has protecting and guiding qualities, exemplified by his equation with Mercury. Tesserae were found in great quantities in Arşu's sanctuary on which the naked figure of Mercury-Hermes is pictured leading a loaded camel.[142] In his right hand the god is holding a purse and a branch, in his left the traditional *caduceus*. Again, the equation is devoid of astrological connotations. In all likelihood the image was inspired by the characteristics associated with the god Mercury, the tutelary deity of merchants and the provider of of prosperity.[143] This hypothesis is corroborated by a tessera which pictures Mercury with the Fortune of Palmyra, and local coins which depict the rod of Mercury flanked on either side by a cornucopia.[144] Both are well-known motifs in the Roman world, symbolizing the affluence coming from trade.[145] Hence Arşu's equation with Mercury shows that, in a development from his military guardianship of the caravans, he functioned as the tutelary deity of the caravan trade. Arşu's connection with Palmyrene commerce is supported by the location of his sanctuary south-east of the wadi, along the route taken by caravans which passed the oasis.

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[140] *PAT* no. 0197 (132 CE).

[141] Starcky, "Relief dédié au dieu Mun^{c}îm", 62.

[142] One specimen, *RTP* no. 174, has long been known. Gawlikowski, "Dieux de Palmyre", 2622-2623, notes that a great many similar pieces were found in Arşu's sanctuary. Only one item has been published: Ruprechtsberger (ed.), *Palmyre*, 337, no. 72. Professor Gawlikowski informed me in writing that the unpublished tesserae are identical.

[143] B. Comber-Farnoux, *Mercure Romain. Le culte public de Mercure et la function mercantile à Rome de la république archaïque à l'époque augustéenne* (Rome 1980), 383-432. There are no grounds for the hypothesis of Drijvers, *Edessa*, 168, that Arşu was equated with the Greek god Hermes, i.e. Hermes ὁδοιπόρος or Hermes ἡγεμόνιος . This identification is based upon Iamblichos' identification of Azizos and Monimos with Ares and Hermes respectively. However, Iamblichos' description of the situation in Edessa does not necessarily apply to Palmyra. Moreover, it is difficult to explain why Arşu was equated with both Ares and Hermes in Palmyra, whereas the two gods refer to distinct deities in Edessa.

[144] *RTP* no. 507; *TMP*, 743-745.

[145] E. Simon and G. Bauchhenss, "Mercurius", *LIMC* VI.1 (1992), 500-554, esp. 501.

Conclusion

The 'group of Bel' that is frequently represented on monuments outside Palmyra is not the result of theological speculation, but mirrors the sociological and political organization of Palmyra. The gods associated with Bel on these monuments were the tutelary deities of the sanctuaries of the four 'tribes' or quarters of the city. Although they were not city gods in the sense that their cult touched upon the entire population of Palmyra, their functioning as the tutelary deities of the four quarters of the city made them into the official gods of Palmyra. The official role of the sanctuaries of the four neighbourhoods is apparent from their relationship with the temple of Bel. These sanctuaries were represented around the cella of the city god, and processions connected the temples in the four quarters with the city temple. The association of the tutelary deities of the four 'tribes' with Bel and his triad outside Palmyra expressed the same notion. The popularity of this constellation of deities testifies to the predominant role of the 'religion of the city' outside Palmyra.

The number and configuration of the gods associated with Bel's triad vary. The choice of one or several of the official gods of the city appears to have been determined by individual motives that are extremely difficult to retrieve, so that it is now impossible to detect a system or fixed order in these groups. In this respect it is important to note that the 'group of Bel' was particularly popular in areas at a short distance from Palmyra; further away, Palmyrenes favoured the cult of Bel and his triad. Possibly, therefore, the dedicant or dedicants entertained close contacts with a particular neighbourhood in Palmyra, or originated in one of them, which would explain the popularity of the Arab deities Allat and Baalshamin in the Palmyrène.

The popularity of Arṣu in Dura-Europos perhaps implies that the dedicants of these monuments originated from the city quarter of the Bene Mattabol in Palmyra. It is equally possible, however, to suppose that they entertained a special relationship with this neighbourhood and its god. Arṣu functioned as guardian over the caravans, which may have contributed to his popularity in Dura-Europos. After all, the city was presumably located on the route of the Palmyrene caravans to the East, and many of the Palmyrene residents in the city were involved in trading activities. This interpretation is supported by a relief from Dura-Europos representing the divine pair Asharu and Sha^{c}d.[146] Conspicuously, the relief of these two warrior gods of the desert was erected by market vendors, amply illustrating the popularity of this type of deity with Palmyrene merchants.

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[146] Cf. the discussion of this relief in the appendix, below, 332-333.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE GADDE OF TADMOR AND DURA

Differentiation versus acculturation

From the middle of the first century CE Palmyrenes are known to have lived within the city walls of Dura-Europos, where they had a religious meeting place, situated in block H 1 near the bazaar.[1] Apart from the fact that it was Palmyrene, little is known about this building. It follows from its modest dimensions that it served the needs of a small community. The complex is divided into a sanctuary and a meeting place, suggesting that it fulfilled a religious as well as a secular function, and its proximity to the bazaar implies that its visitors were involved in the local economy. This accords well with commercial relations between Palmyra and Dura-Europos during the first century CE, as previously postulated.[2] We hardly have any information on the deities worshipped here, although several fresco fragments from this temple picture military gods. Bel and his associates are normally depicted in military costume and the cult of Bel fits the presumed merchant clientele of the sanctuary: in Dura-Europos as well as in other trading centres Palmyrene merchants had a strong preference for Bel, Palmyra's civic deity. Possibly, therefore, the building served as a meeting place for Palmyrene merchants.

Around the middle of the second century CE the sanctuary was thoroughly rebuilt. When they discovered it, the archaeologists called this new building the temple of the Gaddê, after the deities represented on two cult reliefs that were found in the *naos*. The rebuilding resulted in a monumental sanctuary of about twice the dimensions of the former building. This may be taken as a reflection of the wealth and the growth of the Palmyrene community in this period. Like the former complex, the new building combined religious and social functions. An adjacent house north of the temple was incorporated into the complex and converted into a sort of chapter house. It has been argued that this extension was contemporary with the rebuilding of the sanctuary around 150 CE, but I believe a dating to the Roman period, shortly after 165 CE, to be more plausible.[3] Although the inscriptions and graffiti from this part of the complex are unmistakably Palmyrene, they testify to a strong Roman influence. From 165 CE Palmyrene troops serving in the Roman army were stationed in Dura-Europos, a situation which resulted in a considerable growth of the Palmyrene community: it may therefore be assumed that the northern complex was constructed to house the newly arrived Palmyrene military.

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[1] Appendix, 229-230

[2] Chapter I, 34-40.

Most, if not all, of the construction works around the middle of the second century CE were financed by one important Palmyrene family. Gawlikowski has pointed out that the dedicant of the two cult reliefs that were installed in 159 CE, Ḥairan, the son of Maliku, the son of Naṣor, belonged to the Palmyrene aristocracy. Although his name is not preserved in inscriptions from Palmyra, it is probable that he was the great-grandfather of Zenobia's husband, the famous Septimius Odainath.[4] Ḥairan's father contributed to the new temple as well, and consequently we may assume that the project was largely financed by this family.[5] It is well known that many of the politically influential Palmyrene families were involved in the caravan trade. Given the location of the sanctuary near the bazaar, there is good reason to believe that this holds true for the dedicant of these reliefs as well.[6]

The primary source for the reconstruction of the religious situation in the new temple consists of the two cult reliefs that depict Ḥairan, the dedicant of the reliefs, offering incense to the Gad of Tadmor and the Gad of Dura respectively (pls. III, IV).[7] It is far from certain, however, that the Gaddê depicted by the two cult reliefs were the main deities of the sanctuary. Originally *three* cult images were set up at the back of the sanctuary. Next to the two Gaddê reliefs several relief fragments were found, which in all likelihood should be reconstructed as a representation of the Palmyrene god Malakbel.[8] In the past it was frequently assumed that he was the tutelary deity of the temple, but the archaeological evidence in this respect is not conclusive. It is to be expected that the central cult image is related to the flanking reliefs. We shall therefore return to the presumed role of Malakbel as tutelary deity of this sanctuary in chapter VI, after the analysis of the two Gaddê reliefs.

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[3] Cf. the more extensive discussion in the appendix, below 263-264.

[4] M. Gawlikowski, "A propos des reliefs du temple des Gaddê à Doura", *Berytus* 18 (1969), 105-109; idem, "Les princes de Palmyre", *Syria* 62 (1985), 260.

[5] Appendix, inscription no. 15.

[6] M. Raschke, "New Studies in the Roman Commerce with the East", *ANRW* II 9.2 (1978), 646, with notes 878-882, for further references.

[7] Appendix, 248-251 (description of the reliefs) and inscriptions nos. 11-15.

[8] Appendix, 251-256

The word *gad* frequently occurs in Aramaic inscriptions from the first centuries of the Common Era, especially in inscriptions from Palmyra and Hatra. It is used both as an abstract notion meaning 'luck' or 'good fortune' and as a reference to a divine being.[9] In the latter case 'gad' replaces the designation 'god' or 'goddess'.[10] 'Gad' is sometimes used in isolation, but Palmyrene inscriptions invariably associate Gaddê with a place, an object, or a particular group of people. Gaddê are therefore best described as tutelary deities of something or someone and the Gad of Palmyra and the Gad of Dura may be identified as the tutelary deities of the two cities in question.[11]

The two reliefs that depict the tutelary deities of Palmyra and Dura provide a unique opportunity for the study of religious interaction. Both were ordered simultaneously in Palmyra for the rebuilt sanctuary in Dura-Europos. It follows from the iconography of the two reliefs that the Palmyrene dedicant Ḥairan served as priest of the temple, which strongly suggests that the cult of this sanctuary was truly Palmyrene. By depicting the tutelary deities of Palmyra and

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[9] The word seems to derive from the root *gdd*, meaning 'to cut off' or 'to assign': Gesenius, *Hebraïsches und aramaïsches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament* (18th edition 1987), 198 and "gd", *DNWSI*, 212-213. This meaning fits well with the idea of fate; cf. its Greek equivalent Τύχη, which derives from τυγχάνω, 'happen to one'.

[10] On Gaddê in general see F. Cumont, "Gad", PW VII (1912), 433-435; Hoftijzer, *Religio Aramaica*, 59-61; J. Starcky, "Palmyréniens, nabatéens et arabes du nord avant l'Islam", *Histoire des religions*, vol 4 (ed. M. Brillant and R. Aigrain; Tournai 1956), 219-220; Teixidor, *Pantheon*, 89 and 94-95; S. Ribichini, "Gad", *DDD*, cols. 642-646; T. Kaizer, "De Dea Syria et Aliis Diis Deabusque. A Study of the Variety of Appearances of *Gad* in Aramaic Inscriptions and on Sculptures from the Near East in the First Three Centuries AD", *OLP* 28 (1997), 147-166, and 29 (1998) (forthcoming). The latter study provides an overview of all Aramaic Gad inscriptions published until 1996, and has greatly facilitated my research into the topic. To this collection of Gad inscriptions can be added an (anonymous) Gad that occurs in an inscription from the temple of Allat, edited by Drijvers, "Inscriptions from Allât's Sanctuary", 109-119. As will soon become apparent, the latter inscription is of great importance to the interpretation of Gad Tadmor proposed in this chapter.

[11] Dijkstra, *Life and Loyalty.*, 131. Palmyra is the only city in the Aramaic-speaking world where a Gad is mentioned as the tutelary deity of a city. Closest to the Gad of Tadmor is the *gd qrytʾ*, the 'Gad of the village', which occurs several times in contemporary inscriptions from the Palmyrène: *PAT* nos. 1707 (238-239 CE); 1716 (149-150 CE); 1622 (209 CE or later). Perhaps *PAT* no. 1729 (n. d.). Several of the inscriptions from the Palmyrène do not specify the Gad. Possibly several of these instances likewise refer to the Gad of a locality, cf. *PNO* 135-137. Several of the Gaddê that occur in inscriptions from Hatra probably functioned as the Gad of a community, perhaps even of all the inhabitants of the city; for example the 'Gad of King Sanatruq' and the 'Gad of Arab' (*Hatra*, no. 79 (shortly before 240 CE); cf. the discussion of this inscription by K. Dijkstra, "State and Steppe. The Socio-Political Implications of Hatra-Inscription 79", *JSS* 35 (1990), 81-98. Perhaps also *Hatra*, no. 288b). However, it is telling that these Gaddê are never identified by means of the *city*. Given that Gaddê function as an identity marker for their worshippers, communal and civic Gaddê ought to be clearly distinguished.

Dura these reliefs illustrate how a group of Palmyrene expatriates typified the religious situation in both their city of origin and their new residence. In order to grasp the meaning that they attributed to the reliefs and the deities they represent, we have to compare these with the religious culture of the city they relate to. From this comparison it may be inferred how the religious notions expressed by these reliefs relate to the particular social context of Palmyrene expatriates. Beginning with a discussion of Gad Tadmor, the iconography of the relief is taken as the starting point for an analysis of this divine figure in terms of the religious situation in Palmyra. The analysis of the Gad of Dura likewise starts from the iconography and moves on to the religious situation in Dura-Europos. By combining the analyses of the two reliefs we may hope to assess their bearing upon the religious attitude of Palmyrene expatriates.

Gad Tadmor

The relief from Dura-Europos offers the only representation of a goddess that is explicitly labelled Gad Tadmor (pl. IV). Her image is patterned after the Tyche-statue that Eutychides of Sicyon made for the city of Antioch in the third century BCE. The costume and mural crown of the Gad, the rock on which she is seated, and the swimming figure beneath her foot, are all modelled on this famous and influential Tyche-statue.[12] In the case of the statue from Antioch the swimming figure personifies the Orontes river; in combination with Gad Tadmor she undoubtedly personifies the Efqa source at Palmyra. The resemblance between Gad Tadmor and the Tyche of Antioch goes beyond the outward appearance of both deities. A goddess who is more or less identical to Gad Tadmor depicted on the relief appears about a century later on a fresco in the so-called 'temple of the Palmyrene gods' in Dura-Europos, labelled Τύχη Παλμύρων.[13] Like the relief, the painting is related to the Palmyrene community of the city; it depicts the tribune of the Cohors XX Palmyrenorum and several of his men paying homage to three Palmyrene deities and the Tychai of Palmyra and Dura. The equality of Semitic

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[12] *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 172-173. For the Tyche of Antioch, see T. Dohrn, *Die Tyche von Antiocheia* (Berlin 1960); M. D. Stansbury-O'Donnel, "Reflections of the Tyche of Antioch in Literary Sources and on Coins", *An Obsession with Fortune. Tyche in Greek and Roman Art* (*YUAGB* 1994; ed. S. B. Matheson), 51-63.

[13] Appendix, 310-314.

Gad and Greek Tyche is confirmed by a bilingual inscription from Palmyra, in which Tyche in the Greek text is the equivalent of Gad.[14]

There is one significant iconographic difference between Gad Tadmor and the Tyche of Antioch: in contrast to her Antiochene counterpart, the Palmyrene goddess is accompanied by a lion wearing a crescent on its head, an association deriving from a Palmyrene prototype. Some of the small local bronze coins that depict the bust of a goddess with mural crown, viz. the Tyche of Palmyra, also portray a lion on the reverse, a modification of the Greek iconography of Tyche that is characteristic of Syrian Tychai figures and defines them as local deities.[15] In this respect they differ from the Greek conception of Τύχη πόλεως.

Tyche in Hellenistic Syria

The cult of Tyche first emerged in Greece in the sixth or fifth century BCE. By the fourth century BCE the cult of personified fortune was firmly established throughout Greece and the Greek islands, as well as in Asia Minor and Sicily.[16] As Τύχη πόλεως the goddess personified the fate of the city and simultaneously functioned as its protector. Invariably personified by a woman, Τύχη πόλεως was an autonomous deity who could be associated with any city. Her iconography is fairly uniform; the mural crown is her most characteristic attribute and she is often depicted holding a rudder or a cornucopia.[17] In the Hellenistic and Roman period Τύχη πόλεως spread to most Hellenized cities in Syria and the goddess with mural crown became a popular motif on local coinage.[18] Like their Greek counterparts, Syrian Tychai are invariably represented as goddesses. However, the variety of attributes added to the original Greek iconography shows that local religious traditions were integrated into the Greek concept of the goddess. Thus the Tyche of Harran, the city of the moon god, is depicted with a crescent above her mural crown; the Tyche of Petra holds a betyl and, just like the Tyche of Palmyra, the Tychai of Hierapolis, Edessa, and Bosra, are accompanied by lions.[19] It is even dubious whether all these Tychai were actually considered goddesses. The moon associated with the Tyche of Harran may very well refer to Sin, the tutelary deity of this city,[20] and a bilingual inscription on an altar that was recently discovered in the Egyptian port of Berenike by a Dutch-American expedition possibly refers to Iarḥibol as the Tyche of Palmyrene soldiers.[21]

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[14] *PAT* no. 0273 (140 CE).

[15] *TMP*, 367-372, pls. LV and LVII. Other representations omit the lion, and depict the Tyche of Palmyra as a goddess wearing a mural crown. The tesserae provide two representations of anonymous goddesses wearing a mural crown who are in all likelihood to be identified as the Tyche of the city: *RTP* nos. 415 and 507. A head of a goddess with mural crown was found in Diocletian's Camp: Ingholt, "Inscriptions and Sculptures from Palmyra I", 114-115, no. 13, pl. 23, 1. A similar goddess labelled 'Palmyra' or 'Palmyrène' is depicted several times on Palmyrene bullae: K. Parlasca, "Die Stadtgöttin Palmyras", *Bonner Jahrbücher des Rheinischen Landesmuseum* 184 (1984), 172-175, fig. 6. From these representations it may be inferred that the Tyche of Palmyra had a fixed iconography. Contra Parlasca, *op. cit.*, 170. In addition, three tesserae that picture a goddess wearing a mural crown mention Malakbel and Gad Taimi on the reverse: *RTP* nos. 277, 278, 280.

[16] G. Herzog-Hauser, "Tyche", PW VII.2 (1943), cols. 1643-1689; M. P. Nilsson, "Tyche und Daimon", *Geschichte der griechischen Religion*, vol. 2 (Munich 1955), 200-218; L. H. Martin, "Tyche", *DDD*, cols. 1653-1657. S. B. Matheson, "The Goddess Tyche", *An Obsession with Fortune. Tyche in Greek and Roman Art* (*YUAGB* 1994; ed. S. B. Matheson), 18-33.

[17] P. B. F. J. Broucke, "Tyche and the Fortune of Cities in the Greek and Roman World", *An Obsession with Fortune. Tyche in Greek and Roman Art* (*YUAGB* 1994; ed. S. B. Matheson), 34-49. For the horn of Amaltheia in general, see G. Mussies, "Amaltheia", *DDD*, cols. 45-47. Apparently the Τύχη πόλεως was of old associated with the cornucopia. According to Pausanias,

In contrast to most Greek Tychai, Syrian Tychai are manifestations of locally venerated gods and goddesses. In this respect they resemble their Semitic counterparts, the Gaddê, who are also aspects of particular deities, although the derivation from an individual deity is more obvious with Gaddê than with Tychai.[22] Owing to their Greek prototype, Syrian Tychai are always represented as women, whereas Gaddê may be pictured either as male or female. The Gad of Dura-Europos is, of course, the best-known example of a male Gad, but his case is by no means unique in Syria and Mesopotamia during the Graeco-Roman

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IV 30, 4, the eldest statue of the goddess, the Tyche of Smyrna made by Bupalos of Chios, carried a horn of plenty. Numerous other examples are listed by Herzog-Hauser, "Tyche", 1682-1689.

[18] There is no comprehensive survey on Tyche-figures on Syrian coinage to date. Compare the material assembled by W. Wruck, *Die Syrische Provinzialprägung von Augustus bis Trajan* (Tübingen 1931); Dohrn, *Tyche von Antiocheia*, 52 ff.; A. Spijkerman, *The Coins of the Decapolis and Provincia Arabia* (Jerusalem 1978), 218-237; C. Augé, "Sur la figure de Tyche en Nabatène et dans la province d'Arabie", *Petra and the Caravan Cities* (ed. F. Zayadine; Amman 1990), 131-143.

[19] Harran: G. F. Hill, *BMC, Arabia* (London 1922), pl. XIII, 2. Edessa: Drijvers, *Edessa*, 30-31. Hierapolis: *BMC, Galatia*, Pl. XVII, 11-17; Petra: Spijkerman, *Coins of the Decapolis*, 218-237; Bosra: Sourdel, *Cultes du Hauran*, 50. On the various attributes of Tyche figures in Nabatea see also N. Glück, *Deities and Dolphins. The Story of the Nabateans* (London 1965), 395-415, pls. 46-48.

[20] T. M. Green, *The City of the Moon God. Religious Traditions of Harran* (Leiden 1992).

[21] Cf. the discussion of this inscription below, Chapter VI, note 90.

[22] Contra Teixidor, *Pantheon*, 89, 94-95; followed by Ribichini, "Gad", 644, according to whom the Gad stood for a concept of theological providence rather than for a particular and individual deity. Teixidor bases his hypothesis upon the different gender of the Gad and the Tyche of Dura-Europos on the relief from the temple of the Gaddê and the fresco representing the sacrifice by Julius Terentius respectively. Cf. the alternative explanation of this discrepancy, below, 123-124.

period.[23] There are two instances where the relationship between a Gad and a specific deity is obvious. A dedicatory inscription on an altar that was found at Arak, a village situated 28 kilometres north-east of Palmyra, explicitly labels Iarḫibol the Gad of the village;[24] a second inscription states that a deity referred to as 'the god of Ṣaᶜbu' is the Gad of the Nabateans at Palmyra.[25] Although the other Gaddê mentioned in Palmyrene inscriptions are never explicitly identified, there is reason to assume that Gad Iedibel is conterminous with Allat,[26] that Gad Taimi derived from Astarte,[27] Gad Agrud from Belḫammon or Manawat,[28] and Gad Bolma and Gad of the olive tree from Bel. The fact that the sources no longer call these divine figures by their original names implies that the protective or fortune-bringing aspects of particular deities had grown into independence and functioned as separate deities.[29] Gaddê were inextricably connected with a particular place or people and this added a new dimension to their 'personality'.

The original identity of Gad Tadmor

Given the fact that most Gaddê in Palmyra were aspects of locally venerated deities, it is reasonable to suppose that the same holds true for Gad Tadmor. The following attempts to establish the original identity of this deity by means of a comparison with the Palmyrene material. By analogy with the other Gaddê in Palmyra we may assume that Gad Tadmor was intimately connected with a particular place or people: thus, by itself, the original identity of Gad Tadmor has little explanatory value. However, we may presume that the character and functioning of this counterpart explains its development into the Gad of Tadmor.

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[23] The representations on *RTP* nos. 131-132, show that the 'Gad of the olive tree' was a god, viz. Bel. Another example of a male Gad is the god Iarḫibol who was considered to be the 'Gad of Arak' and the 'Gad of the blessed source', cf. below, note 24. For several male Gaddê worshipped in Hatra, see Dijkstra, *Life and Loyalty,* 207.

[24] *PAT* no. 1622 (209 CE, or later).

[25] *PAT* no. 0337 (n.d.). The fact that both gods are imported deities with major cult centres at another location perhaps explains why they are called by their proper names.

[26] Gawlikowski, *Temple*, 97-98.

[27] Gad Taimi was the tutelary deity of the Bene Bonna, a group which belonged to the Bene Mita, the 'tribe' that administered the sanctuary of Atargatis-Astarte.

[28] For the identification of Belḫammon with Gad Agrud see Gawlikowski, *Temple*, 65; idem, "Dieux de Palmyre", 2624; Milik, *Dédicaces*, 74 and 234. For the identification of Manawat as Gad Agrud, see Teixidor, *Pantheon*, 12-18.

[29] The divine name Gadlat, a deity referred to in the homily *On the Fall of the Idols* by Jacob of Serug (Landersdorfer, *Götterliste*, 19; 22-26) and in *Hom*. XI, 167-168, by Isaac of Antioch, illustrates the emancipation of the Gad from its divine prototype. Gadlat is in all likelihood a compound of Gad and Allat, and presents Allat in her function as Tyche or Gad: Drijvers, *Edessa*, 44.

Gad Tadmor is attested once in the epigraphy of Palmyra. A fragmentary inscription dating from the first half of the first century CE that was found in the temple of Bel mentions Aglibol and Gad Tadmor.[30] The list of deities named in this inscription is incomplete and probably has to be complemented with Bel and Iarḫibol.[31] The inscription thereby associates Gad Tadmor with the three most important deities venerated in the temple of Bel. A recently published inscription that was found in the temple of Allat commemorates a contribution to the cult of Bel, Iarḫibol, Aglibol and Astarte.[32] This inscription resolves the much debated question of Bel's female companion and proves that, after the triad, Astarte was the most important deity worshipped in the temple of Bel.[33] Hence the goddess who is frequently associated with Bel and his companions on the figural decoration of his temple, as well as on other monuments from Palmyra, can be identified as Astarte. Like Astarte, Gad Tadmor is associated with Bel, Iarḫibol and Aglibol: it is therefore probable that this Gad should be identified as the goddess Astarte.[34] The fact that the most important goddess venerated in the temple of Bel functioned as the tutelary deity of the city fits the civic character of the cult of Palmyra's main temple.

The relationship between the cult of Bel and Gad Tadmor is supported by a Palmyrene relief dedicated to Bel that was found in Dura-Europos several years ago (pl. X).[35] It depicts a Palmyrene priest in front of a Durene temple that was in all likelihood dedicated to Bel. In the fronton above its entrance is an enthroned goddess flanked by two lions. In view of the relationship of Gad Tadmor with this animal, the goddess shou;d probably be identified as having this function. The image of Palmyra's tutelary deity in the fronton of a temple dedicated to Bel mirrors the cultic situation of the temple of Bel in Palmyra: hence Gad Tadmor exemplified the civic character of Bel's cult both there and abroad.

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[30] *PAT* no. 2767 (n.d.). Cf. Milik, *Dédicaces*, 288-292; Gawlikowski, *Temple*, 60; M. Gawlikowski, "Le tadmoréen", *Syria* 51 (1974), 97-100. According to Milik, *Dédicaces*, 290, the inscription is part of *PAT* nos. 2774 (n.d.) and 2775 (n.d.). Gawlikowski, "Tadmoréen", 97, rightly rejects this reconstruction, on the grounds that *PAT* no. 2767 was found in the so-called *monument à niches*, whilst the other two inscriptions are from 'foundation T'. The place where it was found suggests that the inscription dates from the first half of the first century CE.

[31] Milik, *Dédicaces*, 289-290; Gawlikowski, "Tadmoréen", 97.

[32] Drijvers, "Inscriptions from Allât's Sanctuary", 109-119.

[33] Above, Chapter III, 70-71,for an extensive discussion of Astarte's role in the temple of Bel.

[34] Already suggested by Milik, *Dédicaces*, 171-172. Contra Teixidor, *Pantheon*, 61-62, who argues that most Palmyrene female deities, including Gad Tadmor, are allomorphs of one and the same goddess.

[35] Appendix, 279-282

The fact that a locally venerated goddess functioned as the Gad of Tadmor is in accord with the Semitic concept of Gad. In a truly Semitic context, however, the most important deity of a locality would function as its Gad. In Palmyra, not Bel but his female companion Astarte was the Gad of Tadmor. The first testimonies of Gad Tadmor-Astarte coincide with the establishment of Roman rule in the oasis. It is reasonable to suppose, therefore, that the female sex of Gad Tadmor developed from the Graeco-Roman tradition of identifying the tutelary deity of a city as a goddess. As such, Astarte's functioning as the Gad of Tadmor exemplifies how Graeco-Roman concepts were assimilated into local traditions.

Astarte, Gad Tadmor, Atargatis: the interaction of civic and 'tribal' religion

The lion characterizes the Gad or Tyche of Palmyra as a locally venerated goddess. This animal is elsewhere associated with Atargatis, the great goddess from the city of Hierapolis in north Syria.[36] In the previous chapter I proposed that Astarte should be identified with Atargatis, the tutelary deity of one of the sanctuaries of the four 'tribes' of Palmyra. This hypothesis is strengthened by the iconographical similarities between Astarte-Gad Tadmor on the one hand and Atargatis on the other. The figure of the Gad of Tadmor is strongly influenced by the famous cult statue of Atargatis from Hierapolis-Mabbug, with both the lion and the mural crown deriving from the iconography of the Syrian goddess; moreover, a goddess by the name of Atargatis frequently functioned as the Tyche of Syrian cities. In the course of time Atargatis' protective qualities became proverbial: we may therefore presume that Astarte, in her function as the tutelary goddess of Palmyra, adopted the features of the Syrian mother goddess in order to express her safeguarding qualities.[37] As a result, the Astarte who was venerated in a sanctuary of one of the four neighbourhoods of Palmyra was equated with Atargatis.[38] The fact that the cult of this temple gradually attained a semi-municipal status undoubtedly contributed to this equation.

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[36] Cf. the description of Atargatis' cult statue in *De Syria Dea* pars. 41 and 45: Attridge and Oden (eds.), *The Syrian Goddess*. It is well known that Ishtar, the Babylonian counterpart of Astarte, was frequently associated with lions. However, so were many other female deities who combined sexual and military qualities, for example ᶜAnat. Given the distance in time between Gad Tadmor and ancient Near Eastern goddesses, as well as the absence of any possible link between the two, they are left aside in the present discussion. The only Palmyrene goddess escorted by lions who can be identified with certainty is the Arab goddess Allat: Drijvers, "De Matre inter Leones", 331-352. Teixidor, *Pantheon*, 55-62, suggests Allat functioned as the Gad of Tadmor. However, Allat is never depicted wearing a mural crown, and consequently this hypothesis can be dismissed.

In spite of the similarities in iconography, Gad Tadmor and Atargatis are not identical.[39] The equation of Palmyra's tutelary deity with the goddess Atargatis is inconsistent with the restricted character of Atargatis' cult in Palmyra. Whereas Atargatis was the tutelary deity of a city quarter and its population, Gad Tadmor is typified as the tutelary deity of the whole city and its inhabitants, transcending by her very name the 'tribal' boundaries within the city. This is supported by the designation of other Gaddê in Palmyrene inscriptions. In contrast to Gad Tadmor, Palmyrene Gaddê are frequently related to a particular group of people, called after the so-called 'founding fathers' of families or clans and, as such, powerful identity markers for these groups.[40] The Palmyrene preference for presenting divinities exclusively as the tutelary deities of specific families or clans reflects the organization of Palmyrene society and religion. It is significant that in the case of Gad Tadmor the family names are supplanted by the name of the city, implying that to its inhabitants the city of Palmyra had become a focus of identity alongside the clans. Not surprisingly, therefore, the cult of Gad Tadmor-Astarte is inextricably bound up with Palmyra's civic sanctuary.

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[37] In the sixth century CE the Neo platonist Simplicius (falsely) explained her name as a compound of ʾAttar and Gadde, translated by him as 'place of the gods'. See book IV of his commentary on Aristotle, in the edition of H. Diels, *Simplicii in Aristotelis Physicorum Libros Quattuor Priores Commentaria* (Berlin 1882): διὸ καὶ τὴν Συρίαν 'Αταργάτην τόπον θεῶν καλοῦσιν. In reality, the name of the goddess is a compound of ʿAštart and ʿAteh. In this compound the name of ʿAštart has taken on the generic sense of 'goddess'. Cf. the use of *ʾštrʾ* in first millennium Akadian texts, as well as in Palmyra (cf. above, Chapter III, note 18). Atargatis should therefore be rendered as 'the goddess ʿAteh': Drijvers, *Edessa*, 88, with references to earlier literature.

[38] This is perhaps supported by *RTP* no. 680, a Palmyrene tessera bearing the legend *ʾgn gdʿtʾ dy bl*. Starcky, "Deux inscriptions palmyréniennes", 130-131, proposes translating this as 'protect Gad'ateh of Bel'. *gdʿtʾ* is not attested as a personal name in Palmyra and hence Starcky suggests it is the name of a goddess. If correct, this implies that Ateh was considered a protective deity; *dy bl* implies that, like Astarte-Gad Tadmor, she was intimately connected with Bel. However, this interpretation remains hypothetical, for although the personal name Gadateh is not attested in Palmyra, this compound would not be uncommon in Palmyrene onomastics.

[39] In the past it was generally assumed that Atargatis functioned as the Gad or Tyche of Palmyra: Cumont, *Fouilles*, 110; M. Rostovtzeff, "Hadad and Atargatis at Palmyra", *AJA* 1933, 58; *TMP*, 367-369; R. du Mesnil du Buisson, "Review of M. Galikowski, 'A propos des reliefs du temple des Gaddê à Doura'", *Berytus* 18 (1969), 105-109, *BiOr* 29 (1972), 202-203; *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 172-173; Drijvers, *Edessa*, 105-106; idem, "Dea Syria", *LIMC* III.1 (1986), 357, no. 21; M. Hörig, *Dea Syria. Studien zur religiösen Tradition der Fruchtbarkeitsgöttin in Vorderasien* (AOAT 208; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1979), 168-170.

[40] Four Gaddê are named after the founding father of a family: 'Gad Iedibel': *PAT* nos. 0179 (62-63 CE); 0305 (130-131 CE). 'Gad Taimi': *PAT* no. 0273 (140 CE); *RTP* nos. 135, 273-277, 279. 'Gad Bolma': *RTP* no. 130. 'Gad Agrud': *RTP* nos. 213 and 224. Three Palmyrene Gaddê are specified by means of a place or an object: 'Gad of the blessed source': *PAT* no. 0322 (n.d.); 'Gad of the gardens': *PAT* no. 1621 (n.d.); 'Gad of the olive tree': *RTP* nos. 131-132.

Gad Tadmor as an aspect of Astarte

A relief that was found in the proximity of the temple of Nabû depicts a goddess accompanied by a dog, frequently identified as Astarte-Τύχη Παλμύρων (pl. XX).[41] Although it is likely that the goddess is Astarte, it is unlikely that this relief represents her as Gad Tadmor. The goddess is seated on a throne, at the back of which an eagle is depicted. She is clad in a long *chiton*, her head crowned by a *polos*, and she wears a necklace from which a crescent dangles. Her right foot rests on a small figure and a dog sits at her side. Next to her stands a smaller goddess who is wearing a mural crown and holding an olive branch in her hand. Apart from the mural crown she closely resembles her enthroned companion. The dedicatory inscription on the plinth is heavily damaged and consequently the identity of these deities cannot be established with certainty. The relief is dedicated to *ʾštrʾ ṭbtʾ*, the 'good goddess', but the preceding proper name is lost. So far only two Palmyrene goddesses are known to have been given these epithets: Astarte and Baᶜaltak.[42] In view of the iconography of the enthroned goddess, the identification as Astarte is most probable. The accompanying Tyche provides the goddess with a civic flavour, while the eagle may be taken as a reference to Bel.[43] Astarte was Bel's most important female companion in Palmyra's civic sanctuary: the goddess with the dog therefore probably represents Astarte.

The goddess with the dog has repeatedly been identified as the Tyche or Gad of Palmyra, owing to her presumed resemblance to the Gad of Tadmor on the relief from Dura-Europos.[44] However, the similarity is only superficial: the iconography of both goddesses turns out to be quite different with respect to their major attributes. The Gad of Palmyra is accompanied by a lion, whereas the goddess on the Palmyrene relief is escorted by a dog. The swimming figure depicted beneath the foot of the Gad is naked, a suitable appearance for the personification of the Efqa, but the figure under the goddess with the dog is fully clothed, which makes it most unlikely that it personifies the spring of Palmyra.[45] Moreover, the goddess with the dog is wearing a *polos*, not the mural crown that normally characterizes the protectrix of a city. Not only that, she is accompanied by a goddess with a *corona muralis* and is thereby clearly distinct from Tyche. In short, the goddess with the dog lacks all the features that are characteristic of Gad Tadmor and her identification as such is therefore improbable. Instead, the relief represents the goddess Astarte as she was venerated in one of the 'tribal' sanctuaries in Palmyra.[46] This ancestral goddess was worshipped with Bel in his sanctuary, as a consequence of which she came to be looked upon as Gad Tadmor, functioning in this capacity as an individual deity, who should be distinguished from her 'tribal' counterpart. This is exactly what is being expressed by the present relief, on which the goddess and the Tyche are represented side by side.[47]

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[41] A. Bounni, "Note sur un nouveau bas-relief palmyrénien", *AAS* 15. 1 (1965), 87-98; F. Mellinghoff, "Ein Relief aus Palmyra. Untersuchungen zu einer geschichtlichen Einordnung und Deutung", *Die Araber in der alten Welt*, vol. 5.2 (ed. F. Altheim and R. Stiehl; Berlin 1969), 58-164; Milik, *Dédicaces*, 164-165; Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra*, 19, pl. LI; idem, *Edessa*, 105; idem, "Dea Syria", 357, no. 22; E. Will, "La déesse au chien de Palmyre", *Syria* 62 (1985), 49-55; idem, "La déesse au chien de Palmyre. Note additionelle", *Syria* 63 (1986), 383-384.

[42] Chapter III, note 18.

[43] Will, "Déesse au chien", 54.

[44] Mellinghoff, "Relief aus Palmyra", 98-101; Milik, *Dédicaces*, 165; Drijvers, *Edessa*, 105-106; Parlasca, "Stadtgöttin Palmyras", 169.

The cult of Gad Tadmor among Palmyrene expatriates

The Palmyrene relief from Dura-Europos depicting the Gad of Palmyra mirrors the religious situation in Palmyra and presents the most important goddess venerated in the temple of Bel as the protecting deity of the city. Gad Tadmor thus exemplifies a civic aspect of Palmyrene religion, a choice that befits a small community living abroad. Family religion tends to become less important once people are detached from their home town and constitute a minority in a foreign place.[48] If immigrants choose to continue as a community by holding on to their roots, they search for a common religious ground. The cult of Gad Tadmor met this need. An interesting parallel is provided by the religion of the Nabatean population in Palmyra. Among Palmyrene inscriptions the Gad of these immigrants, the 'god of Ṣa^cbu', provides the only instance in which a Gad is identified as the tutelary deity of a group of people of common origin.[49] As in Palmyra, family religion played a prominent role in the religion of the Nabateans; the 'god of Ṣa^{c}bu', however, was housed in the Nabatean 'national' shrine. Thus, like the Palmyrene expatriates in Dura, the Nabatean immigrants in Palmyra prefered a 'national' god to their family gods.

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[45] Will, "Déesse au chien", 52-53.

[46] This may be inferred from the dog associated with the goddess. This animal is absent when the goddess is represented with Bel. The unusual form of her throne, rightly pointed out by Will, "Déesse au chien", 51-52, is noteworthy in this respect. The throne may very well depict the sanctuary of the goddess, a motif not uncommon in Near Eastern art. On a *kudduru* (boundary stone) from the Middle Babylonian period, the goddess Nanaia sits enthroned on a seat shaped like a temple: J. Goodnick Westenholz, "Nanaya: Lady of Mystery", *Sumerian Gods and their Representations* (CM 7; ed. I. L. Finkel and M. J. Geller; Groningen 1997), 71, fig. 1.

[47] A similar interpretation is proposed by Teixidor, *Pantheon*, 98-99. However, I disagree with Teixidor's statement that the Fortune of Palmyra presents an abstract notion and not an individual goddess.

The Gad of Dura

The relief that depicts the Gad of Dura is particularly interesting with respect to the phenomenon of religious interaction. It was produced in Palmyra and found its way to a Palmyrene sanctuary at Dura: it may thus be said that rather than faithfully mirroring the religious situation in Dura it presents an aspect of it as perceived by Palmyrene immigrants, the relief's Palmyrene origin determining the representation. The fact that the relief was found in Dura-Europos does not guarantee that the Gad of Dura represents a locally venerated deity: the Palmyrene inscription from Arak, in which Iarḫibol is presented as the Gad of this village, shows that Palmyrene expatriates could make a typical Palmyrene god into the Gad of their new surroundings.[50] By comparing the relief with the religious situation in Palmyra and Dura-Europos, we may hope to assess whether or not the Palmyrene residents of Dura adapted to the religion of their new environment.

In contrast to Gad Tadmor, the tutelary deity of Dura is a god. A male Fortune of a city is incompatible with the Greek notion of Τύχη πόλεως, but tallies with the

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[48] The same preference for the official gods of the city is typical of diaspora communities in Babylonia. Cf. the instances cited by Van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria and Israel*, 142-147.

[49] *PAT* no. 0337 (n.d.). The 'god of Ṣa^{c}bu' is attested in Hegra and Petra, where he was housed in the Nabatean 'national' shrine: F. V. Winnet and W. L. Reed, *Ancient Records from North Arabia* (with contributions by J. T. Milik and J. Starcky; Toronto 1970), 157-158. Cf. the discussion of this inscription by Milik, *Dédicaces*, 211-212, and Dijkstra, *Life and Loyalty*, 310-311.

[50] *PAT* no. 1622.

Semitic tendency to consider the most important deity of a locality as its Gad.[51] This Semitic influence is remarkable, for Dura-Europos was a Seleucid foundation. The hypothesis that the Gad of Dura is in fact a local god is confirmed by the iconography of the relief, which modifies a Hellenistic original in order to fit the local circumstances. As with the relief representing Gad Tadmor, the most striking parallel to the relief representing the Gad of Dura is to be found in Antioch. In this case, however, it is not the Gad that has a counterpart in Antiochene iconography, but the accompanying figure of Seleucus Nicator. In order to mark the restoration of Antioch after the earthquake of 115 CE, Trajan erected a gilded copy of the Tyche of Eutychides in the newly finished theatre.[52] Unlike the original, the new Tyche was crowned by the founders of the city, Seleucus and his successor Antiochus.[53] The relief from Dura-Europos likewise pictures Seleucus Nicator in the act of crowning the tutelary deity of the city. The resemblance between the two compositions is remarkable, and in view of the Antiochene influence upon the iconography of Gad Tadmor, it may be assumed that the relief representing the Gad of Dura was likewise inspired by an Antiochene model. Consequently, we may conclude that the gender of the Gad of Dura is a deliberate adaptation prompted, by analogy with the figure of Gad Tadmor, by the local situation in Dura-Europos. The fact that the Gad of Dura is a god therefore strongly suggests that we are dealing with a local deity.

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[51] I know of only one probable example of a male Tyche in the Western world. At Cyrene, on the coast of North Africa, the city's mythological founder Aristaios actually appears to have become its Tyche, for representations from the Roman period present him wearing a mural crown: S. B. Matheson (ed.), *An Obsession with Fortune. Tyche in Greek and Roman Art* (*YUAGB* 1994), cat. no. 36, fig. 13. This instance results from the close connection between the founder of the city and its Tyche (cf. below, note 80), and has to be distinguished from the male Gad in the Semitic world, who results from the tradition of labelling patron deities of cities 'Tyche'. The identifications of other male figures as Tychai, listed by Matheson "The Goddess Tyche", 28, note 43, are hypothetical.

[52] Malalas, 275-276 (Book XI, par. 9). English translation: E. Jeffreys, e.a. (ed.), *The Chronicle of John Malalas. A Translation* (Byzantina Australiensia 4; Melbourne 1986). According to Malalas, Trajan sacrificed a beautiful maiden by the name of Calliope as an atonement for the purification of the city after the earthquake of 115 CE. Later the emperor erected a statue for her in the theatre in the guise of the Tyche of the city. The motif that Tychai are actually girls who have been sacrificed at the foundation of cities, or even buildings, frequently occurs in Malalas's writings, and of course results from Christian polemics.

[53] Representations of the statue described by Malalas have not come down to us. The historicity of his account is supported by a very similar group depicted on gems and Antiochene coins from the reign of Alexander Severus (222-235 CE). On these objects the figure of Antiochus is replaced by a goddess, in all probability Roman Fortuna: M. Rostovtzeff, "Le Gad de Doura et Seleucus Nicator", *Mélanges R. Dussaud* (Paris 1931), 288-289, nos. 8-10, pl. III. Samples of the Antiochene coins from the reign of Alexander Severus have been found in Dura: *TEAD Coins*, 53, nos. 189, and 1706-1710, pl. XXXV. Although they are dated later than the Palmyrene relief, they illustrate the wide dissemination of the Antiochene model. According to G. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria* (Princeton 1961), 216, Trajan's statue did not represent the Tyche of the city, but the Muse Calliope (cf. above, note 52). However, the representations referred to above tally exactly with the Tyche of Antioch. Consequently Downey's suggestion can be dismissed. There is no reason to assume with Rostovtzeff, "Gad de Doura", 289, that Trajan's group copied a Hellenistic original. There are no instances of the group that pre-date the reign of Trajan; on coins from Antioch, the Tyche is invariably pictured alone: Stansbury-O'Donnel, "Reflections of the Tyche of Antioch", 53.

So far most scholars have identified the Gad of Dura as the West Semitic storm god Baalshamin.[54] As a supreme god associated with thunder, Baalshamin resembles Zeus Olympios. In the Hellenistic period Baalshamin is equated with Zeus in Greek inscriptions and his image is modelled upon the head of the Greek pantheon.[55] It is assumed that this oriental Zeus was worshipped in one of the major sanctuaries of Dura, the so-called temple of Zeus Megistos. The presumed oriental character of the tutelary deity of this sanctuary is in turn supported by the iconography of the Gad of Dura on the Palmyrene relief. It will be argued in the following pages, though, that there is no evidence that Baalshamin was the tutelary deity of this temple: in reality, all the evidence testifying to the cult of Baalshamin in Dura suggests that the cult of this deity was of minor importance and was not introduced until fairly late in the history of the city. The iconography of Baalshamin worshipped in Dura-Europos deviates in important respects from the representation of the Gad of Dura, and rather contradicts the presumed identity of both deities. In fact, both the iconography of the Gad and the accompanying figure of Seleucus Nicator suggest that the Palmyrene residents of Dura identified the Gad of Dura as the Greek god Zeus Olympios.

While the Greek identity of the Gad of Dura is in accord with the Hellenistic origin of this city, the fact that a locally venerated deity was considered to be its Gad derives from Semitic practice. Zeus' functioning as the Gad of Dura thereby exemplifies how an oriental concept became assimilated into Greek religion. In this respect the Gad of Dura is a remarkable counterpart of Gad Tadmor, in whose case local traditions were influenced by Greek usage.

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[54] *TEAD* VII-VIII, 257 (Brown); Rostovtzeff, "Gad de Doura", 283 and 291; *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 209-210; Du Mesnil du Buisson, *BiOr*. 29 (1972), 202; P. Collart, "Baalshamin", *LIMC* IV.1 (1986), 76, no. 4.

[55] For a general outline of Baalshamin's iconography, see Collart, "Baalshamin", 75-78, with references to older literature. On the literary evidence, see Teixidor, *Pagan God*, 27-28, and *SB* I, 8. Baalshamin is also equated with Zeus in the cosmogony and theogony of Sanchuniaton, transmitted by Philo of Byblos through Eusebius' *Praep. Evang.* I, 10, 7; cf. A. I. Baumgarten, *The* Phoenician History *of Philo of Byblos: A Commentary* (Leiden 1981), 149-152.

The temple of Zeus Megistos and the orientalization of Greek cults

Of the temples dedicated to some form of Zeus at Dura, only the temple of Zeus Megistos has remains dating from the Seleucid period. Unfortunately it has been excavated only in part, and publication of the finds is incomplete, but the available materials suggest that it was an important civic shrine during the Hellenistic, Parthian and early Roman periods.[56] If the temple was indeed one of the two within Hellenistic Europos, it must have been a major religious centre within the Greek colony. At the beginning of the Roman period it was still an important shrine; an inscription dated 169/70 CE shows that the ruler of Dura belonged to the clientele of the temple and contributed to its rebuilding.[57] That this dedicant was a member of an aristocratic Durene family of Macedonian origin points to a continuity in the clientele of the Hellenistic temple and suggests that the cult retained its importance during the Parthian period.[58] The presentation of the city god as the tutelary deity of the city is in keeping with the Semitic tradition of conflating the patron deity of the city with its Gad. In view of the civic importance of the temple of Zeus Megistos, it is therefore reasonable to suppose that the Palmyrenes considered this Zeus to be the Gad of Dura.

It has often been argued that the cult in the Hellenistic temple of Zeus Megistos had an oriental character and that the Zeus of this temple was actually thought of as Baalshamin.[59] On the basis of the orientalized architecture of the Seleucid temple it is assumed that the cult of this orientalized Zeus was introduced during the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-164/3 BCE), as a result of the religious policy of this ruler. However, it is highly improbable that Antiochus forced his religious preferences upon his empire; the only evidence to this effect is provided by Jerusalem and even this instance is debated.[60] Nor does the architecture of the Hellenistic temple of Zeus Megistos provide the slightest proof that the temple was founded during the reign of Antiochus IV; the assumed reconstruction of the first temple is extremely speculative and consequently its presumed oriental form cannot be used to substantiate this hypothesis.[61] Moreover, even if it is assumed that the architecture of this temple was of an oriental character, this does not necessarily imply that the temple housed an oriental god: it follows from archaeological remains from other Seleucid colonies such as Ai Khanoum that Greek gods could be venerated in orientalized temples.[62]

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[56] Cf. the discussion of this temple in the appendix, 326-327.

[57] *YCS* 1955, 139-142, no. 6 (169 CE). It is not certain that the temple retained its civic importance in Roman Dura.

[58] Contra Downey, *Mesopotamian Religious Architecture*, 96, who suggests that the importance of the Hellenistic temple dwindled in the Parthian period, to reassert itself in the Roman period. Her argument rests upon the reintroduction of the Seleucid dating method in *TEAD PP*, no. 25, dated 180 CE, discussed below, 120. However, the fact that the method of dating was reintroduced does not necessarily imply that the cults of the deities revived as well. The instances cited throughout the following pages show that Hellenistic religious traditions retained their importance in Dura in the Parthian period.

[59] Rostovtzeff, "Gad de Doura", 283-284; idem, *Dura-Europos and its Art*, 36; Eissfeldt, *Tempel und Kulte*, 120; Welles, "Gods of Dura-Europos", 54; Perkins, *Art of Dura-Europos*, 15; Brown in his field notes discussed by Downey, *Mesopotamian Religious Architecture*, 96.

[60] On the situation in Jerusalem, see J. C. H. Lebram, "König Antiochus im Buch Daniel", *VT* 25 (1975), 737-772.

The cult of Baalshamin in Dura-Europos

Baalshamin, the 'lord of heavens' whose cult originated in the West Semitic area, was not traditionally at home in the Middle Euphrates region. As far as one can tell from the evidence, he was not introduced in Dura in the Hellenistic period but in the first century CE. Not only is there no evidence of Baalshamin's cult before the Common Era, but personal names incorporating the name of the god are not among the traditional Aramaic names attested in the city either.[63] The only monument from Dura-Europos that unequivocally testifies to the cult of Baalshamin is a relief that was dedicated in 31 CE by an inscription in Greek and Palmyrene to Zeus Kyrios-Baalshamin.[64] It may be inferred from this relief and the sanctuary in which it was found that the god was a newcomer who reached Dura by way of Palmyra in the first half of the first century CE.[65]

The relief representing Zeus Kyrios-Baalshamin bears several characteristics that are distinctively Palmyrene. The dedicatory inscription on the plinth of the relief is in both Palmyrene and Greek. Iaraios, the sculptor, bears a typical

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[61] Downey's conclusion, ***Mesopotamian Religious Architecture***, 88.

[62] The fact that Greek settlers did not always venerate their native gods in Greek temples caused surprise among scholars and has been explained in a number of ways. Various solutions are listed by L. Hannestad and D. Potts, "Temple Architecture in the Seleucid Kingdom", ***Religion and Religious Practice in the Seleucid Kingdom*** (Studies in Hellenistic Civilization I; ed. P. Bilde e.a.; Esjberg 1990), 96-99.

[63] Compositions of this kind all date from the third century CE, and apparently belong to new residents - mainly soldiers - who settled in Dura at the beginning of the third century CE. On this shift in the nomenclature of the population of Dura: Welles, "Population of Roman Dura", 251-274.

[64] Appendix, inscription no. 5 and 220-221.

[65] The Palmyrene origin of this cult was already postulated by Eissfeldt, ***Tempel und Kulte***, 133-134; ***InvD***, 66; ***TMP***, 306; P. Collart, "Baalshamin", *LIMC* IV.1 (1986), 75. Cf. the divergent opinion in *TEAD* VII-VIII, 310-302.

Palmyrene name, and the closest parallel to the iconography of the god is provided by a fragmentary relief from the sanctuary of Baalshamin at Palmyra.[66] The dedicatory inscription on the relief provides the only instance in which Zeus is characterized as Kyrios in Parthian Dura.[67] In contrast, Kyrios is a common epithet of Zeus-Baalshamin in the Hauran.[68] Arab groups from this region introduced Baalshamin's cult to Palmyra when they settled in the oasis around the beginning of the Common Era, at about the same time that we first encounter the god in Dura-Europos. By the second or third century CE the cult of Baalshamin had spread as far east as Hatra.[69] In view of our information on the dissemination of Baalshamin's cult and the Palmyrene features of both the relief and the ground plan of the sanctuary, it is reasonable to suppose that the god reached Dura by way of Palmyra.

It may be inferred from the ground plan of the sanctuary, its small scale and limited growth throughout the centuries, that it served a small group of worshippers banded together in a religious association.[70] Notwithstanding the Palmyrene origin of the cult, the sanctuary was not visited exclusively by Palmyrenes. It follows from the personal names of the two dedicants of the relief that they were inhabitants of Dura-Europos. The dedicatory inscription of this relief is the only truly bilingual inscription in Greek and Palmyrene from Parthian Dura and in this respect it differs from the exclusively Palmyrene, as well as from the local Durene, monuments from this period. Combined with the Palmyrene features of the relief, this suggests that inhabitants of Dura-Europos and people of Palmyrene origin jointly worshipped Zeus Kyrios-Baalshamin in this temple.

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[66] *SB I,* 210, pl. 103, 1. Representations of Baalshamin are sparse in Palmyra, but present a consistent picture. In all probability they are modelled on the cult image of the god in his temple. For an enumeration of the available material, see Collart, "Baalshamin", 75-78. In all likelihood the temple contained a cult relief instead of a cult statue: Gawlikowski and Pietrzykowski, "Sculptures du temple de Baalshamîn", 446-447. The iconography of Baalshamin in Palmyra reminds one of the Greek god Zeus. Like Zeus, Baalshamin is bearded, wears a long Greek garment and is frequently associated with a thunderbolt. In these respects he differs from most Palmyrene deities, including Bel, who are beardless and wear military costume or the clothing of the desert people. In contrast to the traditional iconography of Zeus Olympios, Baalshamin is frequently depicted holding a bouquet of corn and fruit. Both the thunderbolt and the agrarian products show that this ancient storm god was still considered to be a fertility god in Palmyra.

[67] Zeus Kyrios is attested once more in Dura-Europos in the Roman period. A Greek graffito that probably dates from 210 CE, prays to Zeus Kyrios to preserve the legions of the emperors: *TEAD* V, 161-162, no 483. It was inscribed on the wall of one of the rooms of the Roman praetorium in the temple of Artemis-Azzanathkona. It is uncertain whether this god is to be identified with the god who was worshipped in the temple of Zeus Kyrios-Baalshamin.

[68] Instances are listed by Sourdel, *Cultes du Hauran*, 25-27.

[69] H. Niehr, "Ba^{c}alšamin Studien I-II", *SEL* 13 (1996), 67-73.

[70] *TEAD* VII-VIII, 291-292 (Brown).

Despite the mixed origin of Baalshamin's worshippers, there are no indications that his cult had any influence upon the established religion of the city and the cult of Zeus in the temple of Zeus Megistos. As one of the oldest and most important deities of Dura-Europos, Zeus Megistos was probably considered to be the Gad of Dura. However, the representation of this god on the Palmyrene relief deviates in several respects from the representation of Zeus Kyrios-Baalshamin. The Gad of Dura is bareheaded, whereas Baalshamin is wearing a *polos*, the conventional attribute of Baalshamin that characterizes him as an oriental fertility god.[71] While eagles flank the throne of the Gad, these creatures are absent from the representation of Zeus Kyrios-Baalshamin. It is true that the eagle is frequently depicted in Syrian sanctuaries dedicated to Baalshamin, but this bird has to be interpreted as a symbolic representation of the god's cosmic supremacy, and hence these monuments do not imply that the eagle was an attribute of Baalshamin.[72] Apart from the representation of the Gad of Dura, I know of no representations from Palmyra, nor from the rest of Syria, on which the eagle accompanies Baalshamin.[73] In contrast, the eagle is a typical attribute of Zeus.[74] As the iconography of Baalshamin in Dura matches the iconography of the god in Palmyra, we may therefore conclude that the Gad of Dura differed from the god Baalshamin, who was worshipped in both cities.

Zeus Olympios and Seleucus Nicator

Both the missing *polos* and the presence of the eagles favour the equation of the Gad of Dura with Zeus Olympios. The god's bearded appearance, his semi-Greek dress, the diadem adorning his head and the eagles all accord with the image of the head of the Greek pantheon. The only attribute of the Gad that contradicts his equation with Zeus and favours his identification with Baalshamin is the sheaf of corn he is possibly carrying. Whereas wheat is not a traditional attribute of the Greek god, Baalshamin is frequently depicted holding a bouquet of corn and fruit, attributes that mirror his Semitic character and indicate that Baalshamin preserved his original function as a god of storm and fertility.[75] However, in the case of the Gad of Dura the bunch of wheat does not necessitate an equation with Baalshamin. Sheaves of corn are frequently associated with Hellenistic Tyche figures, including the Tyche of Antioch, and this addition to Zeus' iconography is therefore readily explained by his functioning as the tutelary deity of the city.[76] This accords well with our hypothesis that, like Gad Tadmor, the representation of the Gad of Dura derives from an Antiochene model. We may therefore conclude that the iconography of the Gad of Dura provides no proof that the Palmyrene residents of Dura identified the Zeus of Dura-Europos with Baalshamin. On the contrary, compared to the image of Baalshamin in Dura as well as in Palmyra, the Palmyrene relief presents the Gad of Dura as a predominantly Greek god.

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[71] Starcky, "Deux inscriptions palmyréniennes", 129; *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 209.

[72] Instances are cited in *SB* I, 76-77. Cf. below, Chapter VI, 185. In Palmyra the same motif occurs in temples dedicated to other deities, such as Bel (above, Chapter II, 54), and Allat: Gawlikowski, "Premier temple d'Allat", 102.

[73] A relief from Wadi-ᶜArafa in the Palmyrène, dedicated in 153 CE, represents Baalshamin enthroned between bulls: Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra*, pl. X, 2; *SP*, pl. 107 (catalogue no. 108).

[74] Cf. the many instances listed by M. Tiverios, e.a., "Zeus", *LIMC* VIII.1 (1997), 310-374. Normally the god is accompanied by one eagle, not two, which is depicted sitting on the god's hand or standing next to his throne. Consequently Rostovtzeff's suggestion, "Gad de Doura", 283, that the eagles on either side of the god's throne derive from Near Eastern iconography (compare, for example, the bulls flanking the throne of Adad and the lions on either side of the throne of Atargatis and Kybele) may very well be correct.

The identification of the Gad of Dura as Zeus Olympios is further supported by the presence of Seleucus Nicator on the relief. It is well known that Zeus was Seleucus' divine patron, who, of all the gods, appears most often on his coins.[77] Not surprisingly, the first Seleucid ruler introduced the cult of his favourite god in many of his new foundations.[78] The relationship between this Seleucid king and his tutelary deity was very intimate, especially after his reign. In Seleucia Piera, one of the Syrian cities founded by Seleucus, an inscription was found from the years 187-176 BCE that refers to a local royal cult for Seleucus Zeus Nicator.[79]

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[75] I know of two exceptions to this rule. On a gem of unknown provenance and on a coin from Cydonia (Crete), Zeus is represented with ears of corn: Tiverios, e.a., "Zeus", nos. 355 and 522.

[76] Eutychides' original was holding a palm branch. On virtually all later coins from Antioch and its surroundings the palm branch is replaced by sheaf of corn: Dohrn, *Tyche of Antiocheia*, 9; Stansbury-O'Donnel, "Reflections of the Tyche of Antioch", 56.

[77] Newell, *Eastern Seleucid Mints*; H. Schwabl, "Zeus. Teil II", PWSup 15, (1978), col. 1405; S. Sherwin-White and A. Kuhrt, *From Samarkhand to Sardis. A New Approach to the Seleucid Empire* (London 1993), 28.

[78] A. B. Cook, *Zeus. A Study in Ancient Religion*, vol. 2 (Cambridge 1925), 1187-1210. Cf. Malalas, 199-202 (Book VIII, pars. 12-16).

[79] *OGIS* 245; M. M. Austin, *The Hellenistic World from Alexander to the Roman Conquest: A Selection of Ancient Sources in Translation* (Cambridge 1981), 177. This tradition was tenacious. An inscription found at Saryschlar near Kula in Lydia dated as CE 228/9, still refers to the cult of Zeus Seleucios: A. D. Nock, "Notes on Ruler Cult", *JHS* 48 (1928), 41-42, followed by E. Bickerman, *Institutions des Séleucides* (Paris 1938), 255, note 2.

In Antioch the Roman emperor Trajan erected a copy of Eutychides' Tyche, crowned by Seleucus and his successor Antiochus. By analogy with the representation from Antioch that associates the founder of the city with its Tyche, we may assume that the Palmyrenes in Dura-Europos believed that Seleucus Nicator was the founder of their new home. Seleucus' association with the Tyche of Antioch exemplified the belief that he had instigated the cult of Tyche there with the foundation of the city. This notion was widespread in the Hellenistic and Roman world, and consequently we may suppose that the Palmyrenes also thought that Seleucus had introduced the cult of Zeus to Dura-Europos.[80]

It is important to note that this characterization of Dura-Europos and its religion was made by a group of foreigners around the middle of second century CE. The Palmyrene point of view does not necessarily tally with the outlook of the local population; nor does it have to be historically correct. By studying the material from Dura-Europos we may assess whether or to what extent, the Palmyrene characterization of the city and its religion mirrors ideas that were current among the local inhabitants of Dura-Europos.

Evidence for the persistence of Greek religion in Parthian and Roman Dura

Dura-Europos was undoubtedly a Hellenistic foundation, but there is no firm proof that it was actually established by Seleucus Nicator. Whether the city was founded by Seleucus, one of his generals, or even one of his successors, is of little importance in the present context. What matters is the fact that, from the Parthian period onwards, the inhabitants of Dura-Europos considered Seleucus to be the founder of their city. In a divorce act from Dura dated 254 CE, the city is characterized as κωλονεία Εὐροπαίων Σελεύκου Νεικάτορος.[81] Dura's affinity with Seleucus Nicator can be traced back to the first century BCE and probably originated well before that time. The earliest attestation of Seleucus stems from the temple of Artemis, where his name was found inscribed on a stone that probably served as the base of his statue.[82] In the Roman period the deified Seleucus is known to have had his own priest. A papyrus deed of sale from 180 CE is dated both in the official Roman manner and by the enumeration of the eponymous priests of Apollo, Zeus, King Seleucus Nicator and the *progonoi*, 'the ancestors' - the official cults of the Seleucid dynasty.[83] Significantly, the priests of Seleucus and Zeus are mentioned together in this Roman document, thereby affirming the connection between Zeus and the Seleucid ruler exemplified on the Palmyrene relief and confirming the Greek identity of the Gad.

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[80] Malalas, 275-276 (Book XI, par. 9). The chronicle of Malalas presents the installation of the cult of Tyche as an obligatory part of the establishment of a city by Hellenistic and Roman rulers: E. Jeffreys, "Malalas' World View", *Studies in John Malalas* (Byzantina Australiensia 6; eds. E. Jeffreys, B. Croke and R. Scott; Melbourne 1990), 57, note 1, for a full list of instances in the chronicle of Malalas. Given the presumed origin of the cult, it is not surprising that Tyche and founder were often closely associated. In the *Kaisareion* that Julius Caesar erected in the centre of Antioch, for instance, the emperor set up a bronze statue of the Fortune of Rome as well as a statue of himself: Malalas, 216 (Book IX, par. 5) and 287 (Book XII, par. 7). In the case of Constantinople, a gilded wooden statue of Constantine bearing the Tyche of Constantinople was paraded around and set up in the hippodrome to be revered by the reigning emperor on the anniversary of the foundation of the city: Malalas, 320-322 (Book XIII, pars. 7 and 8).

[81] *TEAD PP*, no. 32.

This practice of dating documents by means of the religious functionaries of royal cults was widespread in the Seleucid era; it is, however, a most unusual feature of a document from the Roman period.[84] It is hardly conceivable that the four Hellenistic cults were introduced in Dura-Europos as late as the second century CE; the document therefore probably mirrors the official religion of the Seleucid city.[85] This is confirmed by the architectural remains of two temples in Dura that date back to the Seleucid period. We have no information on the deities that were worshipped in these temples before the Common Era, but inscriptions from the later period testify to the cults of Artemis and Apollo and of Zeus Megistos respectively.[86] Both Apollo and Zeus are mentioned in the papyrus from 180 CE. The Hellenistic foundations that were found beneath the two Parthian temples therefore corroborate the hypothesis that the cults listed by the Roman document date back to the Hellenistic period.[87]

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[82] *TEAD* III, 54-55, pl. X, 2. The four-bar sigma indicates that the inscription dates from the first century BCE: *TEAD* V, 83-84.

[83] M. Rostovtzeff, "Progonoi", *JHS* 55 (1935), 56-66; *TEAD PP*, 126-133, no. 25. The worship of Seleucid rulers is well attested in cities of the Seleucid empire. Instances are listed by Bickerman, *Institutions des Séleucides*, 242-245. The epithet Nicator is first attested during the reign of Antiochus III. The regime of this king may therefore serve as a *terminus post quem* for the installation of the cult: F. Stähelin, "Seleukus Nikator", PW II.2 (1921), col. 1233. As far as we know, Dura-Europos was the only city in which the cult was still practised in the second century CE. According to Rostovtzeff, "Gad de Doura", 288, Seleucus still received a cult in Antioch on the Orontes at the beginning of the second century CE. Although the statue erected by Trajan shows that Antioch still cherished its founder, it does not necessarily imply that the king still received a cult in this city.

[84] C. B. Welles, *Royal Correspondence in the Hellenistic Period. A Study in Greek Epigraphy* (New Haven 1934, reprint Rome 1964), 183-184.

[85] Welles, "Gods of Dura-Europos", 53.

[86] On the architecture of the temple of Zeus Megistos in the Hellenistic period, see the appendix, 326-327. For the architecture of the Hellenistic temple of Artemis, see Downey, *Mesopotamian Religious Architecture*, 76-79, figs. 30-31 (with references to earlier publications).

[87] Thus Rostovtzeff, *Dura-Europos and its Art*, 36 and 65; Eissfeldt, *Tempel und Kulte*, 120; Welles, "Gods of Dura-Europos", 54; *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 209-210; Downey, *Mesopotamian*

It has often been argued that the term 'Hellenistic' applied to the cults of Apollo, Zeus, Seleucus Nicator, and the ***progonoi***, as listed by the Roman document, is meaningless, and that these Greek cults had actually changed into oriental cults. The available evidence is meagre, but suggests that these gods at least partly preserved their Greek character during the period Dura was ruled by the Parthians. It is unknown whether Seleucus Nicator was actually the object of a cult in the Parthian period, but the inscription from the temple of Artemis shows that the inhabitants of Dura did not forget the Hellenistic founder of their city.[88] Another inscription from this temple likewise testifies to the tenacity of Greek traditions in Parthian Dura. A Greek inscription dated in the year 3 CE is dedicated to Artemis and Apollo ἀρχηγοῖς, an epithet that is in perfect accord with Hellenistic religious practice.[89] From the reign of Antiochus I it is frequently bestowed upon Apollo, since by that time the god was officially considered to be the founder of the Seleucid dynasty. Although the Seleucid cult of Artemis and Apollo is less well attested, instances occur all over the Seleucid Empire from the reign of Antiochus III onwards. Thus the inscription from the temple of Artemis unambiguously testifies to the survival of Hellenistic cults in Parthian Dura. It is noteworthy that the dedication in question was made by a man bearing a Semitic name: from this it may be inferred that Greek cults were not confined to people of Macedonian descent, but were practised by other sections of the population as well.[90]

Of the temples dedicated to some form of Zeus at Dura, only the temple of Zeus Megistos has remains dating back to the Hellenistic period, from which it is reasonable to suppose that Zeus Olympios was originally worshipped in this temple. Apart from his name, there are no indications that Zeus Megistos was still considered a Greek deity in Parthian Dura - neither, though, is there any evidence pointing to the contrary. In view of the survival of the other Hellenistic cults listed by the Roman document, it is reasonable to suppose that the cult of Zeus was still considered to be essentially Greek. The temple of Zeus Megistos

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Religious Architecture, 96. In view of the available evidence it is impossible to determine whether the cult of Zeus was introduced during the reign of Seleucus Nicator or one of his successors.

[88] Rostovtzeff, "Gad de Doura", 284, inferred from Seleucus' presence on the Palmyrene relief that this king received a cult in Parthian Dura. Although the Seleucus of the relief is probably more than human, the Palmyrene relief provides insufficient proof for the continuity of his cult.

[89] *TEAD* III, 63, D 161.

[90] The dedicant's name,'Αβιδνήριγλος is the Greek transcription of the Aramaic name *ʿbnrgl*, a genitive compound meaning 'servant of Nergal': Stark, *Personal Names*, 103. This name - incorporating the name of the Babylonian deity Nergal - is attested several times in Palmyrene inscriptions: Stark, *op. cit.* 42.

was a major civic shrine, and hence it is likely that the Palmyrene immigrants looked upon its tutelary deity as the Gad of Dura. If anything, the Palmyrene relief shows that Palmyrene immigrants considered him a Greek god and perceived Dura-Europos as a Greek city. Although the evidence from Dura is fragmentary, it is sufficient to prove that this was not a Palmyrene invention, but derived from ideas that were current in the city.[91] Inhabitants of Dura considered Seleucus Nicator to be the founder of their city and associated the first Seleucid ruler with Zeus, who was worshipped in Dura from the Hellenistic period onwards. The inhabitants of Dura were still aware of the Hellenistic origin of his cult in the Roman period, and the fact that outsiders also characterized the city and its religion as Greek enhances the idea that more than four hundred years after its foundation, the inhabitants of Dura-Europos still cherished their Greek heritage and established their identity along these lines.[92]

Evidence for a local cult of Gad-Tyche

The civic importance of the temple of Zeus Megistos readily explains Zeus' functioning as the Gad of Dura on the Palmyrene relief. His role as the tutelary deity of the city tallies with the Semitic custom of viewing the most important god in these terms and is in keeping with the Palmyrene origin of the relief. It is not known whether the inhabitants of Dura looked upon Zeus as the tutelary deity of their city as well, as the Palmyrene relief is the only instance that testifies to the cult of Gad in Parthian Dura. It may perhaps be argued that a cult of Greek Tyche would have been more in keeping with the Greek origin of Dura-Europos, especially since Tyche was particularly popular in Hellenistic colonies.[93] Several Greek inscriptions which invoke ἀγαθὴ Τύχη show that the Greek concept of

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[91] The statement of Millar, *Roman Near East*, 451-452, and 469, that the Hellenistic past of Dura-Europos was only heavily emphasized in the early years of its occupation by Rome, underestimates the continuity of Hellenistic culture in Parthian Dura. Apart from the evidence discussed above, it is significant that the Palmyrene reliefs of the Gaddê date from the Parthian period. The debate with respect to the continuity of Hellenistic cults in Parthian Dura is of course related to the official religious policy of the Parthian overlords, itself a hotly debated issue. In the case of Dura, there is no proof whatsoever that the Parthians interfered in local religious matters; cf. Rostovtzeff, *Dura-Europos and its Art*, 60-61; Millar, *Roman Near East*, 446 and 451.

[92] Trajan's erection of the statue of the Tyche of Antioch provides an interesting parallel. Like the Palmyrenes in Dura-Europos, Trajan was an outsider in Antioch. As with the Palmyrenes, it is hard to believe that Trajan reintroduced the notion of the city's Hellenistic past. In all probability this tradition was cherished by the inhabitants of Antioch and hence was of importance to their self-identification.

[93] Broucke, "Tyche and the Fortune of Cities", 36.

Fortune was indeed known in Parthian Dura - unfortunately, however, all these instances are part of a dating formula and thus do not unequivocally prove that Tyche was actually worshipped in Dura.[94] Consequently it is impossible to say whether the presentation of Zeus as the Gad of Dura is a Palmyrene innovation or was generally accepted in the city.

In contrast to inscriptions from the Parthian period, Τύχη Δούρας is frequently attested in graffiti and inscriptions from the Roman period. The majority of these were found in or near the Palmyrene gate.[95] A sanctuary dedicated to the Tyche of Dura was in all likelihood located in its proximity and it may be inferred from the concentration of inscriptions referring to Tyche that were found at this location, as well as from their agents, that the cult of the Tyche of Dura was intimately connected with the Roman army.[96] Significantly, the only representation of Τύχη Δούρας likewise derives from a military context. A fresco dated around 239 CE pictures Julius Terentius, the tribune of the Cohors XX Palmyrenorum, and several of his men, paying homage to three Palmyrene deities and the Tychai of Palmyra and Dura (pl. XIII). In view of the absence of Tyche's cult in the Parthian period, and her intimate relationship with the Roman army, we have to reckon with the possibility that the cult of the Greek goddess was only introduced in the Roman period.

In contrast to the representation of the Gad of Dura, the Tyche of Dura represented on the Julius Terentius fresco is pictured as a goddess. This shift in the sex of Dura's tutelary deity may simply result from the fact that Tychai are invariably represented as goddesses. There is, however, some evidence suggesting that the Palmyrene concept of Gad changed under the influence of the Roman army. Three altars that were found in the Palmyrene gate are respectively dedicated in Greek to Τύχη Δούρας, in Palmyrene to *gd*, and in Latin to *genius Dura*.[97] From this it may be inferred that Tyche, Gad and Genius were identical notions to the Roman troops stationed at Dura. There can be no doubt that the gender of the Fortune of Dura venerated near the gate was female. If Gad and Tyche are indeed synonymous, it follows that, by analogy with Tyche, the male Gad of Dura changed into a goddess in the Roman period.

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[94] *YCS* 1955, 129-131, no. 2 (35/ 36 CE); *TEAD* VII-VIII, 130-131, no. 869 (118/ 119 CE). Dura inscription no. 869 mentions a god as the divine recipient. This might imply that gods could be labelled Tyche in Dura-Europos, but this does not seem very likely. The only possible instance that testifies to a cult of Tyche in Parthian Dura is a fragmentary relief that was found in the temple of Adonis: *TEAD* VII-VIII, 163-165, pl. XXXI, 1; *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 37-38, and 172. The relief depicts a goddess wearing a mural crown, flanked by two doves or eagles. An inscription is lacking: consequently the identity of the goddess and the date of the relief are unclear. The goddess may be identified as Atargatis, Astarte, or a local Tyche: Drijvers, *Edessa*, 109-110. Stylistically, the work is related to a group of sculptures that bear dates from the first century CE. This date, however, is questionable, since the relief was found in the temple of Adonis, a sanctuary that was founded in the second century CE. The relief therefore provides no conclusive evidence for the cult of the Tyche of Dura in the Parthian period.

[95] Greek graffiti from the Palmyrene Gate: *TEAD* I, 41, C3; idem, 38-39, R. 15 (?); *TEAD* II, 126-127, no. D.41; idem, 127-128, no. D.42; *TEAD* V, 18, no. 376. In addition, three altars dedicated to the Fortune of the city were found here: *TEAD* I, 45-46, no. 3 (Greek; n.d.); *TEAD* I, 45, no. 2 (Greek; n.d.) and 61-62, fig. 24 = *InvD.* no. 13 (Palmyrene; n.d.; cf. the discussion of this inscription in the appendix, below, no. 61); *TEAD* I, 42-44, no. 1, fig. 21 (Latin; dated between 185 and 193 CE: Dijkstra, *Life and Loyalty*, 280). Apart from the inscriptions from the Palmyrene gate, the Tyche of Dura is attested in a graffito on the jamb of the outer door of the temple of Zeus Kyrios-Baalshamin (*YCS* 1955, no. 13; n.d., Roman period), and a private house in block G4 (*YCS* 1955, 152, no. 29; n.d., Roman period).

[96] *TEAD* I, 46, and *TEAD* II, 155.

Evidence for religious integration

The relief from the temple of the Gaddê depicts the Palmyrene priest Ḥairan making an offering before the Gad of Dura, the town's prime deity. This may be more than a symbolic gesture: it could well reflect the actual participation of Palmyrenes in the cult of the temple of Zeus Megistos. It is certain that Palmyrenes belonged to the clientele of the Roman temple of Zeus Megistos, and it is possible they already visited the temple in the Parthian period, as may be inferred from a fragmentary relief originating from the Parthian temple that is probably Palmyrene.[98] It is presumably to be dated to the first half of the first century CE, for its material and style tally with a group of Durene sculptures from that period. The badly damaged fragments depict a man leading a camel to the right. In front of him is the beginning of a Greek graffito: AP.... the first two letters of the name of the figure who may thus be identified as the Arab god Arṣu - the camel accords well with the traditional iconography of this god. Arṣu was an important deity in Palmyra and was also popular in Dura, but apart from this fragmentary relief all instances that testify to his cult date back to the Roman period. Significantly, all these references occur in a Palmyrene context. Furthermore, a relief of Arṣu with a Palmyrene dedicatory inscription was found close to the fragmentary relief from the Parthian period (pl. XV).[99] Though it provides no firm proof, the relief from the Roman period augments the possibility that the figure on the fragmentary relief from the Parthian period is likewise to be identified as Arṣu. The popularity of Arṣu in Palmyra, and the fact that his cult was restricted to the Palmyrene community of Dura, suggest that the fragmentary relief testifies to the presence of Palmyrenes in the Parthian temple of Zeus Megistos.

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[97] Above, note 95.

[98] *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 56-57, no. 44, pl. XI. They were found beneath the floor of the vestibule and the *pronaos* of the final temple., from which it may be inferred that they antedate the construction of the final temple, which was constructed shortly after 160 CE.

[99] Appendix, inscription no. 59 and 329.

Irrespective of the question of whether Ḥairan's veneration of the Gad of Dura on the Palmyrene relief is due to pictorial imagination or cultic reality, his act testifies to the Palmyrene immigrants' respect for the major cult of their new residence. An interesting parallel is provided by a Palmyrene inscription from Nazala, a village situated about 110 kilometres south-west of Palmyra on the road from Palmyra to Damascus.[100] In the year 145 CE, Palmyrene residents there participated in the construction of the temple of the 'great god of Nazala', the village's prime deity. In view of the intricate relation between religion, politics and social structure, the contribution of these Palmyrenes clearly expresses their wish to integrate into their new environment. It is noteworthy, however, that they do so while maintaining their own identity: the dedicants explicitly identify themselves as Palmyrenes.[101] In this respect the religious behaviour of the Palmyrenes at Nazala and Dura-Europos is very similar. As a foreign community each pays homage to the god of the city and thereby submits to the socio-political institutions he embodies. In this respect it is important to recall that the ruler of Dura belonged to the clientele of the temple of Zeus Megistos. Paying homage to either the god or the ruler of the city came down to very much the same thing. The idea expressed by the Palmyrene relief therefore finds a close parallel in a dedication made by another foreign community that resided in Dura-Europos, a group of people from the village of Anath. In the inscription that commemorates the erection of a shrine for their local god Aphlad in the year 54 CE, the ruler of Dura is listed as the prime beneficiary.[102] Like the Palmyrenes in the temple of the Gaddê, the citizens from Anath committed themselves to their new surroundings while simultaneously preserving their religious identity.

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[100] *PAT* no. 0257:
b[š]nt 457
byrḥ qnyn ʿmwdʾ
dnʾ wtṭlylʾ dlʿl
mnh ʿbdw zbdbwl
wʿtnwr wmlkw wʿmrw
wydyʿbl bny bršmš
br zbdbwl tdmryʾ [dy]
bnzly lʾlhʾ rbʾ
dnzly ʿl ḥyyhn wḥ[yy]
bnyhn wḥyy blḥy
brt ʿmrw ʾmhn

In the year 457. In the month of Qanun (= November 145 CE) Zabdibol and Ettenur and Malku and Imru and Iedibel, the sons of Barshamash, the son of Zabdibol, the Palmyrenes who (live) in Nazala, have made this column and the roof that is on top of it for the Great God of Nazala for the lives of themselves and the lives of their sons and the life of Belḥai, the daughter of Imru, their mother.

[101] Dijkstra, *Life and Loyalty*, 135-136.

Conclusion

The iconography of the two reliefs and the identity of the two Gaddê bear witness to the interaction of local and Hellenistic religious traditions. Both reliefs are modelled upon an Antiochene prototype and both modify this original in order to fit the local circumstances. The figure of Gad Tadmor is modelled upon the Tyche of Antioch, whereas the lion characterizes her as a locally venerated goddess. The relief representing the Gad of Dura is inspired by Trajan's copy of the Tyche of Eutychides, but depicts a locally venerated god in the Tyche's place. The functioning of prominent local gods or goddesses as Gaddê is in accord with Semitic custom. In Palmyra, however, not Bel but his female companion Astarte functioned as the Gad of the city. This adjustment was in all likelihood inspired by the Hellenistic convention of identifying the Fortune of a city as female. In Dura, a Greek god functioned as Gad of the city, thereby adopting a function characteristic of oriental deities.

Both the Gad of Tadmor and the Gad of Dura-Europos have an explicitly local character and exemplify the civic aspect of the religion of Palmyra and Dura-Europos respectively. Gad Tadmor can be identified as Astarte, the most important goddess associated with Bel in his temple, and the Gad of Dura as the local Zeus, the tutelary deity of one of the most important sanctuaries in Dura-Europos. The municipal character of both deities is strengthened by the dedication of the two reliefs in Nisan, the month in which the festival of the city god was celebrated in Palmyra. We may conclude that both reliefs faithfully mirror the religious situation in the city they refer to. The simultaneous adherence to the native religion and the religion of the new residence accords well with the identification of the dedicant as a member of an aristocratic Palmyrene family, involved in the trade between the two cities. Thus at a social level the two Gaddê reliefs testify to the intimate economic relations between Palmyra and Dura-Europos.

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[102] *TEAD* V, 113-116, no. 418. The same Seleucus, 'commander and governor of the city', is honoured in an inscription from the temple of the Palmyrene gods: *TEAD* II, 92 (52 CE).

CHAPTER FIVE

THE CULT OF NABU

The interaction of Greek and Babylonian culture

In the *naos* of the temple of the Gaddê in Dura-Europos a small statue was found, identified by the Palmyrene dedication on the plinth as the god Nabû (pl. VII). The god is clad in a long tunic and a mantle and strikes a lyre with a plectrum; a laurel wreath adorns his head. The iconography of this statue clearly derives from Apollo *Citharoedus*.[1] Nabû (or Nebo, as his name was pronounced in the Syrian area) is a god of Babylonian origin: hence the representation of this god in the guise of Greek Apollo is the result of religious interaction. In the following pages I aim to establish where this identification was made and when it came about. Although the statue was made locally, the cult of Nabû in the temple of the Gaddê at Dura-Europos should probably be understood in a Palmyrene context. The statue was found in a Palmyrene sanctuary and is accompanied by a Palmyrene dedication by a man with a Palmyrene name. There is no clear proof of an autochthonous cult of Nabû at Dura-Europos;[2] the cult of the Greek god Apollo, on the other hand, is well attested in the city.[3] However, there are no indications that the inhabitants of Dura identified Apollo with the Babylonian god Nabû. In order to confirm the Palmyrene origin of Nabû's cult at Dura-Europos, the Dura statue will be compared with material from Palmyra.

The small statue of Nabû from the temple of the Gaddê is the only instance testifying to the cult of this deity among Palmyrene expatriates, and his presence in the temple of the Gaddê thus calls for an explanation. An important clue in this regard is provided by the two Gaddê reliefs, both of which have an overtly civic meaning, implying that the presence of Nabû should be explained along similar lines. Nabû is never associated with Bel on monuments that were found outside Palmyra: in the oasis itself, however, he is intimately connected with the tutelary deity of the city temple. In order to explain Nabû's presence in the temple of the Gaddê, the second part of this chapter is devoted to the relationship of Bel and Nabû in Palmyra.

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[1] *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 64-65. Cf. the description of this statue in the appendix, 257-258.

[2] Apart from the statue, Nabû is attested in a Greek graffito which probably dates from the Roman period: *TEAD* IV, 77-78, no. 178. His name does occur frequently as a theophoric element in local Aramaic names. They are attested especially frequently in the temples of Aphlad and Azzanathkona, temples that are connected with Anath, a village situated on the Euphrates south of Dura-Europos: F. Pomponio, *Nabû. Il culto e la figura di un dio del pantheon babilonesi ed assiro* (Studi Semitici 51; Roma 1978), 203. Given the fact that the cult of Nabû was known in the Euphrates region (cf. below, 130), it is possible that the god was likewise worshipped in Dura-Europos or in the villages in its territory.

[3] Chapter IV, 120-121.

Nabû : origin and diffusion

Nabû is a deity of Babylonian origin who, in the course of Mesopotamian history, developed from a comparatively unimportant god into one of the most prominent Babylonian deities.[4] In the Old Babylonian period the god was fairly insignificant. He belonged to the circle of Marduk in Babylon and was first and foremost a divine scribe, considered to be Marduk's minister and lodged in his temple, Esagil.[5] From the end of the Cassite period onwards Nabû is heralded as Marduk's son. In imitation of his father, he becomes a god of divine wisdom.[6] Nabû's growing importance during this period can be deduced from the cult in Ezida at Borsippa, where he gradually supplanted his father. At the beginning of the first millennium BCE he replaced Marduk and became the city god of Borsippa and not long before the rise of the Late Babylonian Empire, Nabû had reached a position equal to that of his father.[7] Nabû hymns on Neo-Babylonian cylinders celebrate the god as 'lord of the gods' (*bel ili*) and 'king of the gods of heaven and underworld' (*lugaldimmerankia*), an epithet traditionally reserved for Marduk.[8] A piece of theological propaganda, known as the 'Exaltation of Nabû', can be read as proof of Nabû's newly acquired supremacy.[9] It is not without interest that he continues to hold his prominent position in the Seleucid Era: in Hellenistic documents from southern Mesopotamia, 'lord of the universe' is a customary epithet of Nabû.[10]

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[4] Pomponio, *Nabû*, 237-243.

[5] Pomponio, *Nabû*, 43, 161 and 177-183. W. G. Lambert, "Divine Love Lyrics from the Reign of Abi-ešḫu", *MIO* 12 (1966), 44.

[6] The oldest case in which Nabû is referred to as Marduk's son dates from the end of the Cassite period: Pomponio, *Nabû*, 49-50. However, most examples date from the first millennium: *op. cit.*, 161-162. On Nabû as a god of divine wisdom: *op. cit.*, 183 and 243-244.

[7] During the reign of Adad-apla-iddina (1069-1048 BCE): Pomponio, *Nabû*, 64.

[8] W. G. Lambert, "Nabû Hymns on Cylinders", *Festschrift Lubor Matouš*, vol. 2 (ed. B. Hruška and G. Komoróczy; Budapest, 1978), 79.

[9] The Exaltation of Nabû can be partially reconstructed on the basis of E. Ebeling, "Mittelassyrische Texte zur Herstellung von wohlriechenden Salben", *Orientalia* NS 17 (1948), pls. 25-26 (VAT 13834), and E. Ebeling, *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts*, vol. 2 (Leipzig 1923), no. 360. Cf. R. Borger, *Die Inschriften Asarhaddons Königs von Assyrien* (AfO

From the eighth century BCE the cult of Nabû is widely attested among the Aramaic-speaking population living in the Syrian area, Egypt and Anatolia.[11] The god enjoyed great popularity in these regions, particularly in northern Syria, well into the Common Era. It is noteworthy that, in conformity with Nabû's increasing importance during the Neo-Babylonian period, Syrian sources frequently mention Nabû before Bel.[12] Nabû and Bel were the main gods of Edessa according to the *Doctrina Addai*, the *Acts of Sharbel* and Jacob of Sarug's *Homily on the Fall of the Idols*.[13] Drijvers points out that the reference to the two Babylonian gods by these Christian authors gives a true picture of the most important cults of Edessa during the first centuries of the Common Era.[14] The Syriac acts of Mar Maᵓin mention an altar dedicated to Nabû on a mountain top near the Euphrates.[15] Kafr Nabû, a village in northern Syria, is named after the god and the local temple may have been dedicated to him.[16] According to pseudo-Melito from Sardis in the Syriac Apology, Nabû was likewise the object of a cult in Hierapolis, the city of the Syrian goddess Atargatis.[17] Both Macrobius and the anonymous author of *De*

Beiheft 9; Graz 1956), 61; W. G. Lambert, "The Great Battle of the Mesopotamian Religious Year", *Iraq* 25 (1963), 190.

[10] G. J. P. McEwan, *Priest and Temple in Hellenistic Babylonia* (FAOS 4; Wiesbaden 1981), 35, 123, and 125.

[11] The god is first mentioned in an Aramaic inscription from Sfire in northern Syria, dating from the eighth century BCE: *KAI* no. 222. Other instances from the early period are listed by Drijvers, *Edessa,* 54-56.

[12] Drijvers, *Edessa*, 40-45, and 179.

[13] G. Phillips (ed.), *The Doctrine of Addai, The Apostle*, 23 (trans.), 24, 11. 15 (text). Acts of Sharbel: W. Cureton, *Ancient Syriac Documents Relative to the Earliest Establishment of Christianity in Edessa and the Neighbouring Countries* (London 1864), 41. Jacob of Sarug, Homily on the Fall of Idols: P. S. Landersdorfer, "Die Götterliste des mar Jacob von Sarug in seiner Homilie über der Fall der Götzenbilder. Ein religionsgeschichtliches Dokument aus der Zeit des untergehenden Heidentums", *Programm des Kgl. Gymnasium im Benediktiner Kloster Ettal für das Schuljahr 1913/14* (Munich 1912), 13 (trans.), 19, 1.52 (text).

[14] Drijvers, *Edessa*, 40-45.

[15] G. Hoffmann, *Auszüge aus syrischen Akten persischer Märtyrer AKM* 73 (1880), (reprint 1966), 31.

[16] V. Chapot, "Antiquités de la Syrie du Nord", *BCH* 26 (1902), 180; *IGLS*, no. 376.

[17] W. Cureton, *Spicilegium Syriacum* (London 1855), 25, pars. 12-15. According to the euhemeristic author of this treatise from the third century CE, Nabû's statue is actually that of Orpheus the Thracian magician. The reason for this identification undoubtedly has to be sought in Nabû's identification with Apollo at Hierapolis (cf. the following notes). Like Orpheus, Apollo is frequently depicted playing the lyre. However, the statue of Nebo-Apollo described by the author of *De Syria Dea* and Macrobius does not match the Greek type of Apollo *Citharoedus*, from which it may perhaps be inferred that two cult statues of the god were known in the holy city.

Syria Dea equate the Nabû of Hierapolis with Apollo.[18] Their description of Apollo's cult statue conforms to the iconography of the Babylonian god Nabû rather than to that of the Greek Apollo. In contrast to Greek tradition, Apollo of Hierapolis is not a young nude deity, but a bearded one wearing a cuirass. A statue which tallies with Macrobius' description of Apollo's statue at Hierapolis was found at Hatra.[19] In all probability, therefore, Nabû was worshipped as such in this Arab city in the Mesopotamian desert. The god was also the object of a cult in Parthian Assur, where he possessed a temple in the Common Era. [20]

The cult of Nabû in Palmyra

Nabû was an important deity in Palmyra, where his name is an element in quite a number of personal names.[21] It was formerly thought that the god was especially popular in Hellenistic Palmyra and that his cult fell into oblivion in the Common Era, but this view has been invalidated by the recent identification of an important temple as the sanctuary of Nabû.[22] Although some preliminary reports have been published on this matter, the final publication has not yet appeared, but the material made available thus far sheds a new light on Nabû's character and cult in the oasis and it may be expected that future publications will complement this picture.[23] The temple in question is located close to the temple of Bel, to the north of the wadi, towards which the propylaea of the temple of Bel are oriented. According to the inscriptions that were found there, the temple was built during the last quarter of the first century CE and was used until the fall of the city in 272 CE.[24] Unfortunately, no representations from the temple can be identified with certainty as Nabû; consequently the tesserae depicting Nabû remain the principal source of information with respect to the statue from Dura.

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[18] *De Syria Dea*, pars. 35-36. Greek text and translation: Attridge and Oden (ed.), *The Syrian Goddess*, 46-49; Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, I, 17, 66.

[19] H. J. Lenzen, "Ausgrabungen in Hatra", *AA* 70 (1955), 339, figs. 2-3; H. Seyrig, "Bas-relief des dieux de Hiérapolis", *Syria* 49 (1972), 104-108.

[20] Drijvers, *Edessa*, 46-47.

[21] Pomponio, *Nabû*, 228-229.

[22] J. G. Février, *Religion*, 97-99; Drijvers, *Edessa*, 46.

[23] The temple was excavated by the Syrian archaeological mission in 1963-64 and 1970: Bounni and Saliby, "Six nouveaux emplacements fouillés à Palmyre (1963-1964)", *AAS* 15 (1965), 121-138; A. Bounni, *Archaeologia* 16 (May 1967), 48; idem, "Nabû palmyrénien", *Orientalia* 45 (1976), 106-111; idem, "Le sanctuaire de Nabû à Palmyre", *Petra and the Caravan Cities* (ed. F. Zayadine; Amman 1990), 157-167.

[24] A. Bounni and M. Saliby, "Six nouveaux emplacements", 128. The earliest datable inscription from the temple is from the year 99 CE.

Nabû is represented on seven tesserae, four of which identify the god as such.[25] We can distinguish two types: a bust and a standing figure. The bust of the god is beardless. Nabû wears a *chiton* and a *himation*, or perhaps a cuirass; a *calathos*, a headdress characteristic of the iconography of oriental deities, adorns his head.[26] One bust of Nabû is depicted holding a lyre, an attribute which is also to be found on the four representations that depict the god standing.[27] Like the instances representing the bust of Nabû, the standing figures are clean-shaven, but in contrast to the first type, the *calathos* is missing. The god is depicted half-draped, naked, or wearing a long-sleeved tunic. The figure with the lyre in his left hand is obviously based upon the Greek type of Apollo *Citharoedus*. Greek influences are strongest on *RTP* no. 301. Here a naked god with a lyre is standing with his legs crossed, his right arm behind his head, a pillar to his left.[28] In late Greek sculpture Apollo *Citharoedus* is frequently represented half-naked, but several instances do picture the god fully clothed. Hence both modes of representation in Palmyra clearly derive from Greek art in the fourth century BCE and the Hellenistic period.

Although none of the Palmyrene representations of the god Nabû-Apollo tally exactly with Nabû's statue from Dura-Europos, the Dura statue is closely related to the Palmyrene representations of Nabû as Apollo *Citharoedus*. In all probability therefore, the Greek form of the Dura statue reflects Nabû's cult at Palmyra. The only divergent feature of the Dura statuette is that it probably showed the god bearded, whereas Nabû-Apollo is pictured clean-shaven in Palmyra. The beard is incompatible with the Greek iconography of Apollo, and possibly results from his identification with the Babylonian god, who is traditionally shown with a beard. According to the author of *De Syria Dea*, the statue of Apollo-Nabû at Hierapolis was bearded.[29] However, it may be inferred from the elaborate description of this statue by Macrobius that the image of the god that is identified as Apollo has no relationship whatsoever with representations of the Greek god but may instead be characterized as a local variant of the traditional iconography of the Babylonian Nabû.[30] Consequently there are insufficient grounds to assume that the Dura statuette was created under the influence of Apollo-Nabû at Hierapolis.[31] In view of the diffusion of Nabû's cult in Syria from the eight century BCE, it is reasonable to suppose that the Babylonian iconography of the god was well known and widespread in this region. Durene artists were probably familiar with this mode of representation and apparently the beard did not conflict with the way in which the Palmyrene dedicant pictured his god. Whether the origin of the motif has to be sought in Palmyra, Hierapolis, Dura or Mesopotamia, is a question which cannot yet be answered.

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[25] *RTP* nos. 119, 237, 288, 290, 301, 302, and 310. For a discussion of Nabû's character on the basis of these tesserae, compare *TMP*, 285-290; R. A. Stucky, "Figures apolliniennes grecques sur des tessères palmyréniennes", *Syria* 48 (1971), 135-141; A. Bounni, "Les représentations d'Apollon en Palmyrène et dans le millieu Syrien", *Mythologie gréco-romaine, mythologies périphériques. Etudes d'iconographie* (Colloques internationaux du C.N.R.S. 593; ed. L. Kahil and C. Augé; Paris 1981), 107-112; Teixidor, *Pantheon*, 106-111; Drijvers, *Edessa*, 47-48 and 65-75; Gawlikowski, "Dieux de Palmyre", 2644-2546; W. Pratscher, "Das Pantheon von Palmyra", *Religionsgeschichte Syriens. Von der Frühzeit bis zur Gegenwart* (ed. P. W. Haider, M. Hutter and S. Kreuzer; Stuttgart 1996), 223-224.

[26] *RTP* nos. 237, 288, 290.

[27] *RTP* no. 237. Cf. *RTP* nos. 119, 301, 302 and 310. No legend identifies the god represented on *RTP* no. 237. However, the similarities with the busts of Nabû on *RTP* nos. 288 and 290, and the lyre that accompanies the standing figure identified as Nabû on *RTP* nos. 119, 301 and 302 , make this identification practically certain.

[28] Stucky, "Figures apolliniennes grecques", 137, no. 4, points out that this iconography is based upon a late Hellenistic statue of a Lycian Apollo.

All evidence for Nabû's cult in Palmyra dates from the Common Era, although in all likelihood his cult in the city was much older. Nabû probably arrived in Palmyra together with Bel and other Babylonian deities, in a period in which the city was strongly influenced by the East, well before the Common Era. As is the case with many deities of Babylonian origin who were worshipped in Palmyra, it is impossible to detect whether they came from Babylonia directly or reached the city by way of Assyria. In the case of the cult of Nabû the evidence strongly suggests a direct loan from Borsippa. This may be inferred from Nabû's association with the goddess Nanaia, as well as from the identification of this couple with Apollo and Artemis respectively. Nabû's Babylonian origin is also apparent from his affiliation with the god Bel, which will be discussed in the second part of this chapter.

On one tessera Nabû-Apollo is associated with a young woman wearing a short double *chiton*.[32] In her left hand she holds a bow; with her right hand she reaches out to pull an arrow from the quiver visible behind her shoulder. Apart from the *chiton* and the *calathos*, this goddess looks exactly like the Greek goddess

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[29] *De Syria Dea*, par. 35.

[30] Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, I, 17, 66 (cf. above, note 17).

[31] Contra *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 226.

[32] *RTP* no. 310, pl. XVII.

Artemis.[33] The pair are represented in a similar fashion on a Palmyrene terracotta plaque which was described by Seyrig.[34] Apollo can be identified as the Babylonian god Nabû on the basis of the tesserae discussed above and Artemis can be identified as Nanaia on the basis of *RTP* no. 285, where the legend *nny* accompanies the representation of the Greek goddess. Hence the two deities who are represented in the guise of the Greek gods Apollo and Artemis were identified as Nabû and Nanaia respectively in Palmyra.

Like Nabû, Nanaia was originally a Babylonian goddess. Apparently the Palmyrenes were still familiar with her roots in the Common Era.[35] On *RTP* no. 285 the Greek huntress is accompanied by a goddess identified as *škny*, 'Shaknai', and both are characterized as *šyʿt bbl*, 'assistants of Babylon'. Nanaia was already an important goddess in Old Babylonian times. Though she became increasingly popular in other Mesopotamian cities, she always was and remained the goddess of Uruk, where she was venerated from the third millennium BCE until her temple was destroyed in the middle of the second century BCE.[36] Nanaia has many attributes and characteristics in common with another goddess of Uruk, Inanna-Ishtar.[37] Like her, Nanaia was a goddess of love and fertility who functioned as the patroness of the reigning king. In the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian periods Nanaia takes over Inanna-Ishtar's warlike character.[38]

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[33] L. Kahil, "Artemis", *LIMC* II.1 (1984), 641-643, nos. 191, 226-227; E. Simon and G. Bauchhenss, "Artemis-Diana", *LIMC* II.1 (1984), 804-805, types 24, 26, no. 122.

[34] H. Seyrig, "Plaquettes votives de terre-cuite", *AAAS* 1 (1955), 154, no. 17. The same couple are perhaps represented on nos. 18-19. Figure 17, pl. II, does not tally with Seyrig's description, and depicts no. 18.

[35] Her cult is well attested in Palmyra. Nanaia is mentioned on seven tesserae (*RTP* nos. 134, 238-242, 285), and depicted on two or four (*RTP* nos. 198 (?), 285, 286 (?), 310). In addition to the tesserae, the goddess is mentioned in an inscription found in the temple of Bel, bearing the date 6 BCE, in which a member of the Bene Komare is honoured for his contributions to various cult buildings for 'Herta, Nanaia, and Reshef, the gods': *PAT* no. 2766. Cf. the improved readings of M. Gawlikowski, *Temple*, 60-63, and Milik, *Dédicaces*, 220.

[36] W. Heimpel, "A Catalog of Near Eastern Venus Deities", *SMS* 3.4 (1982) 15. J. Goodnick Westenholz, "Nanaya: Lady of Mystery", *Sumerian Gods and their Representations* (CM 7; ed. I. L. Finkel and M. J. Geller; Groningen 1997), 57-84, offers the most recent and extensive discussion of the history of her cult. Her provenance and the etymology of her name are unclear: Goodnick Westenholz, "Nanaya", 58-60.

[37] R. D. Biggs, *Šàziga: Ancient Mesopotamian Potency Incantations* (TCS 2; Locust Valley, New York 1967), 31 and 44.

[38] E. Matsushima, "Problèmes des déesses Tašmetum et Nanaia", *Orient* 16 (1980), 140-141. The resemblance between the two goddesses clearly comes to the fore in a self-laudatory Sumero-Akkadian hymn from the eight century BCE discussed by E. Reiner, "A Sumero-Akkadian Hymn of Nanâ", *JNES* 33 (1974), 221-236. In this hymn Nanaia appropriates attributes of Ishtar and identifies herself as 'daughter of Sin, sister of Shamash'. In describing herself as having a beard (I, l. 4), Nanaia establishes her identity with the bearded Ishtar in her manifestation as the planet Venus. So apparently Nanaia, like Ishtar, was a Venus-goddess. Almost two thousand years later, around 1000 CE, the Syriac lexicographer Bar Bahlul still mentions Nanaia as a name for Venus

Despite the similarities between Nanaia and Inanna-Ishtar, though, the goddesses are to be distinguished from each other.[39]

The interpretatio Graeca *of a Babylonian god*

Nabû's identification with Apollo and his association with Nanaia-Artemis in Palmyra tallies with the religious situation in the Mesopotamian city of Borsippa. From the beginning of the first millennium Nabû was worshipped in Ezida with Nanaia.[40] According to the Greek historian and geographer Strabo (ca. 64/63 BCE-23 CE) Borsippa was the holy city of Artemis and Apollo.[41] This suggests that the ***interpretatio Graeca*** of the Babylonian gods exemplified by their iconography in Palmyra is based on a Babylonian prototype. However, Strabo's description of the religious situation in Borsippa is the account of an outsider, written about 20 BCE, long after the Seleucid period.[42] It is not self-evident that the same identification was made in Borsippa itself. In order to substantiate the Babylonian pedigree of Nabû-Apollo and Nanaia-Artemis in Palmyra, we therefore have to find out whether this identification was made in Babylonia as well.

Apart from Strabo's account there is no evidence from which it may be inferred that the Babylonian and the Greek pairs were identified with each other in Mesopotamia. Strabo's assertion may, however, be supported by investigating the ground of this ***interpretatio Graeca***. The identification of Babylonian with Greek deities is extremely complex and varied and before we turn to the discussion of this particular case a few general remarks should be made on the phenomenon. Divinities from different cultures are identified with each other because they share certain characteristics in the perception of specific people, not because they are exactly identical. A great many factors can be the basis for such an identification.

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among the Arabs. For a discussion of Nanaia as a Venus-goddess see Heimpel, "A Catalog of Near Eastern Venus Deities", 15-17.

[39] Lambert, "Divine Love Lyrics", 43; Pomponio, *Nabû*, 41; Goodnick Westenholz, "Nanaya", 80.

[40] A *kudurru* (boundary stone) from the reign of Mérodach-Baladan I (1173-1161 BCE) is the oldest known instance where Nabû is mentioned together with Nanaia and Tashmetu: S. Page, "A New Boundary-Stone of Merodach I", *Sumer* 23 (1967), 66, ll. 22-27. From this it does not follow that Nanaia was already considered to be Nabû's spouse. All other documents date from the first millennium: Lambert, "Divine Love Lyrics", 44; Matsushima, "Problèmes des déesses Tašmetum et Nanaia", 133; Pomponio, *Nabû*, 169.

[41] *Geogr.* XI.I.7: τὰ δὲ Βόρσιππα ἱερὰ πόλις ἐστιν᾽ Αρτέμιδος καὶ ᾽Απόλλωνος.

[42] On the *terminus post quem* for Book XI, see F. Lasserre, "Strabon", *KP* 5, cols. 382-384.

First, the common ground between two gods may be of a mythological-theological nature, as is the case when deities share certain personal characteristics, such as an association with war, love or wisdom. Second, the resemblance may be of a functional nature. This is the case when gods fulfil a similar function for a particular group, such as, for example, the guardianship of a particular profession. Third, the identification may result from similarities in the iconography, or in the fourth place, from the homophony of the name. The phenomenon is rendered even more complicated by the fact that the factors contributing to the *interpretatio Graeca* of Babylonian gods vary according to time, place and population. Thus in order to comprehend the identification of Nabû and Nanaia with Apollo and Artemis in Babylonia in the period before Strabo, we have to look for their shared characteristics within a particular context in Seleucid Babylonia.[43] The following section hopes to show that both Nabû and Nanaia and Apollo and Artemis were intimately associated with the rulers of the Seleucid dynasty.

Nabû and Nanaia and the Seleucid kings

The special preference of the Seleucid rulers for Nabû and Nanaia is well known. Antiochus I Soter reconstructed the main temple of the couple in Borsippa. His reverence for Nabû is best elucidated by his own words, the prayer he addressed to the god in the 'Borsippa cylinder', celebrating his reconstruction of Ezida:

> Prince Nabû, son of Esagila, first-born of Marduk, noble child of Erua, the queen, on your entry to Ezida, the true house, the house of your Anu-ship, the

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[43] The reasons cited so far for the identification all concentrate upon Apollo and Nabû. Most authors point out the shared characteristics of both gods. Thus it is said that both are the sons of a supreme deity, are gods of wisdom and oracles, and are associated with the planet Mercury: Février, *Religion*, 97; *TMP*, 285; Bounni, "Répresentations d'Apollon", 108; Pomponio, *Nabû*, 227-228. Alternatively, Drijvers, *Edessa*, 67-74, stresses the common function of Nabû and Apollo for the Seleucid house. However, like the authors cited above, Drijvers states that the two were identified because both were considered oracle gods. Drijvers substantiates his claim by referring to the oracular function of the god Apollo-Nebo in *De Syria Dea*, pars. 35-36. However, it is a misrepresentation to say that Nabû was an oracle god in Babylonia. Traditionally this role was fulfilled by the gods Shamash and Adad. Not suprisingly, therefore, there are hardly any epithets bestowed upon Nabû that characterize him as an oracle god. Among the great quantity of epithets assembled by Pomponio, *Nabû*, 177-188, only three have this quality (*op.cit.*, 187). If originally Nabû was not an oracle god, the description of the Hierapolitan cult of Apollo-Nabû in Hierapolis becomes all the more interesting. It suggests that the oracular function of this Hierapolitan god resulted from his assimilation to the Greek god Apollo.

> dwelling which pleases your heart, with rejoicing and jubilation, may - at your true command which cannot be denied - my days be long, my years many, my throne firm, my reign long-lasting under your lofty sceptre which sets the boundary between heaven and earth. May my good fortune be in your pure mouth, may I conquer the countries from sunrise to sunset, may I gather their tribute with my hands and bring (it) for the perfection of Esagila and Ezida.
> (O) Nabû, first son, when you enter Ezida, the true house, may favour for Antiochus, king of lands, (and) favour for Seleucus, the king, his son, Stratonice, his consort, the queen, be in your mouth. [44]

Antiochus' prayer amply illustrates Nabû's functioning as the tutelary deity of the reigning king. In this respect the ideological framework of the text is thoroughly Babylonian.[45] Nabû had functioned in this role from the Neo-Babylonian period, and in their attempt to win popular support for their rule by adopting the Babylonian royal ideology, the Seleucid kings hardly differed from the foreign rulers who preceded them.

The god's role in relation to the reigning king came especially to the fore in the celebration of the Neo-Babylonian Akitu festival, the New Year festival which was celebrated from the fifth until the twelfth of the month of Nisan. The Akitu festival is best known as it was celebrated in Babylon during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II (604-562 BCE).[46] As elsewhere in the country, the festival in Babylon celebrated the supremacy of its city god, and as it concerned Marduk-Bel, the city god of the capital, the festival came to play a major role in the Babylonian state religion, underlining the close ties between the human ruler and the national deity. The ritual procedures of the festival reflected the country's religious hierarchy and reaffirmed Marduk's position as head of the Babylonian pantheon. This was expressed most clearly on Nisan the eighth, when the various city gods of the kingdom assembled in Esagil to hail Marduk as their King. The gods were lined up according to their status and when they processed from Esagil to the Akitu chapel outside the city, the procession visualized the hierarchy of the Babylonian pantheon for the benefit of the crowd assembled along the road.[47] To the Babylonian kings, the festival was a golden opportunity to win popular support for their rule. Prior to the procession to the Akitu chapel, the king had been ritually reappointed by Marduk and could thus claim divine approval of his rule.[48] During the procession itself the king played a leading role: he was, as the traditional formula runs, to 'take Bel by the hand' and lead him out of the temple.

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[44] A. Kuhrt and S. Sherwin-White, "Aspects of Seleucid Royal Ideology: the Cylinder of Antiochus I from Borsippa", *JHS* 111 (1991), 75-78, (transcription and translation by A. Kuhrt).

[45] S. Sherwin-White, "Ritual for a Seleucid king at Babylon?", *JHS* 103 (1983), 156-159; S. Sherwin-White, "Seleucid Babylonia: A Case Study for the Installation and Development of Greek Rule", *Hellenism in the East. The Interaction of Greek and non-Greek Civilizations from Syria to Central Asia after Alexander* (ed. A. Kuhrt and S. Sherwin-White; London 1987), 1-31; Kuhrt and Sherwin-White, "Aspects of Seleucid Royal Ideology", 71-86; Kuhrt and Sherwin-White, *From Samarkhand to Sardis*, 36-37.

[46] For a description of the ritual as celebrated in Babylon in the days of Nebuchadnezzar II, see the recent studies by J. A. Black, "The New Year Ceremonies in Ancient Babylon: 'Taking Bel by the Hand' and a Cultic Picnic", *Religion* 11 (1981), 39-59; A. Kuhrt, "Usurpation, Conquest and Ceremonial: from Babylon to Persia", *Rituals of Royalty: Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies* (eds. D. Cannadine and S. Price; Cambridge 1987), 31-40; K. van der Toorn, "Het Babylonische nieuwjaarfeest", *Phoenix* 36 (1990) 10-29; idem, "The Babylonian New Year Festival: New Insights from the Cuneiform Texts and their Bearing on Old Testament Study", *Congress Volume Leuven 1989* (*SVT* 43; ed. J. A. Emerton; Leiden 1991), 331-344; M. E. Cohen, *The Cultic Calendars of the Ancient Near East* (Bethesda MD 1993), 400-453.

The god of Borsippa was closely linked to his father Marduk-Bel in nearby Babylon, and this intimate relationship was especially prominent during the celebration of the Akitu festival. Though the god Marduk was in the limelight during the Babylonian New Year festival, the Neo-Babylonian kings received their divine mandate from Nabû. The role of the latter deity in the royal ideology of the Neo-Babylonian period is frequently underrated. The fact that the king received the sceptre of kingship from the hands of Nabû in Borsippa, and then made his way to Babylon in his company, indicates that the god acted as a tutelary deity for the king in the Neo-Babylonian Akitu festival. This function explains why Nabû is so regular a theophoric element in Babylonian royal names from the eighth to sixth centuries BCE (e.g. Nabû-shuma-ishkun, Nabû-nausir, Nabopolassar, Nebuchadnezzar, Nabonidus). In Neo-Babylonian times, the Nabû temple was a privileged place of intercession for the king.[49]

Like the Babylonian kings, the Assyrian, Persian and Seleucid rulers readily grasped the political possibilities of the festival. The Assyrian king Sennacherib (704-681 BCE) introduced the festival in Assur and thereby played an important role in its distribution through northern Mesopotamia.[50] When the Achaemenid king Cyrus entered the city of Babylon in 539 BCE, he paid homage to Bel and Nabû.[51] Even the Seleucid rulers had recourse to this time-honoured festival in order to win the support of the Babylonian population. When it comes to the participation of the Seleucid kings in the Akitu festival, two texts stand at our disposal. The earliest witness is a fragmentary chronicle concerning the reign of Seleucus III, which shows that the eighth of Nisan was still a major liturgical date in 224 BCE. On that day, the 'ritual for Seleucus, the King, and his sons' was to be performed.[52] The second text mentioning a Seleucid king in connection with the Akitu festival is a recently published astronomical diary from 204 BCE, from which it can be inferred that the Seleucid king Antiochus III personally participated in the festival.[53] In view of the intimate relationship between Nabû and Bel in the celebration of the Akitu festival, it is noteworthy that Antiochus I Soter restored Nabû's temple at Borsippa as well as Marduk's temple, Esagil, in Babylon.

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[47] J. van Dijk, *Literarische Texte aus Babylon* (VAS N.F. 8; Berlin 1987), nos. 108-110. B. Pongratz-Leisten, *Ina Šulmi Irub. Die Kulttopografische und ideologische Programmik der Akitu-Prozession in Babylonien und Assyrien im I. Jahrtausend v. Chr.* (Mainz am Rhein 1994), 133-136.

[48] J. A. Brinkman, *A Political History of Post-Kassite Babylonia 1158-722 BC* (AnOr 43; Rome 1968), 294. The Assyrian coronation-ritual (cf. K. F. Müller, *Das assyrische Ritual, Teil I. Texte zum assyrischen Königsritual* (MVAG 41/III; Leipzig 1937)) appears to have been annually repeated: Van der Toorn, "Babylonische nieuwjaarsfeest", 16-23; Pongratz-Leisten, *Ina Šulmi Irub,* 106-111.

[49] V. Scheil, "Catalogue de la collection Eugène Tisserand", *RA* 18 (1921), 30-31, no. 21. The text has been republished by J.-M. Durand, *Documents cunéiformes de la IVe Section de l'Ecole pratique des Hautes Etudes* (Geneva-Paris 1982), no. 341.

As the tutelary deity of the reigning kings, Nabû is closely connected with the Akitu festival: the wide dissemination and continuity of the festival therefore accounts for the survival of his cult. The celebration of the Akitu festival was not confined to Babylon or Assur, but was observed all over Mesopotamia, from Uruk in the south up to Harran in the north, eventually reaching Syria as well. Throughout the country it was primarily a local event; the festival of the city or of the city god, the Akitu festival continued to be celebrated until at least the third century CE, and probably for quite some time after, its wide dissemination and popular appeal making it into a powerful instrument of religious-political propaganda.[54]

Nabû's eminent position, exemplified by his role as the tutelary deity of the king, is supported by the traditional function of Nanaia, the goddess associated with the god of Borsippa from the beginning of the first millennium. Nanaia's function as the patroness of the king is a predominant aspect of her character throughout the history of her veneration.[55] The goddess is asked to protect the reigning king Abi-eshuh and his city, Babylon, in an Old Babylonian lyric that celebrates the love between Nanaia and Muati, Nanaia's spouse in the Old Babylonian period who was identified with Nabû at the beginning of the first millennium.[56] She has a comparable function in the Middle Assyrian period.[57] When the goddess is associated with the god Nabû this aspect of her character does not change: she remains a goddess of love and fertility who is often invoked to protect the king.[58] The Neo-Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar II re-installed the statues of Nabû and Nanaia in the Ezida.[59]

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[50] B. Menzel, *Assyrische Tempel*, vol. 1 (Rome 1981), 23.55-57; H. Galter, "Die Bautätigkeit Sanheribs am Assurtempel", *Orientalia* 53 (1984), 433-441; A. Livingstone, *Court Poetry and Literary Miscellanea* (SAA 3; Helsinki 1988), no. 32, ll. 22-24.

[51] ANET, 316. On the adoption by Achaemenid rulers of Babylonian royal ideology, see Kuhrt, "Usurpation, Conquest and Ceremonial", 20-55.

[52] A. K. Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles* (Locust Valley 1975), 283-284, no. 13b. For an interpretation of this text with respect to the Seleucid state religion see Sherwin-White, "Ritual for a Seleucid King at Babylon?", 156-159; Kuhrt and Sherwin-White, "Aspects of Seleucid Royal Ideology", 82; idem, *From Samarkhand to Sardis*, 130-131.

[53] A. J. Sachs and H. Hunger, *Astronomical Diaries and related Texts from Babylonia*, vol. 2 (Vienna 1989), 202-203; Sherwin-White, "Seleucid Babylonia", 1-31.

[54] Cf. below, 146-147, for the celebration of this festival in Palmyra and other Syrian cities during the Common Era.

The ideology of Nabû and Nanaia as patron gods of the human king was adopted by foreign rulers. Nabû and Nanaia were especially popular in the Neo-Assyrian period with the rulers of the Sargonid dynasty who supported their cult in Babylonia as well as in Assyria.[60] Sargon I (721-705 BCE) bestowed numerous benefits on the cult of Nabû, and it is telling that this foreign king assumed the epithet *zanin Esagila u Ezida*, 'caretaker of Esagila and Ezida', an epithet that was also used by his successors and, we may note, by Antiochus I in his building inscription.[61] The dialogue between Nabû and Assurbanipal (669-627 BCE) provides an interesting piece of evidence for the special relationship between the Assyrian monarchs and Nabû. In this text, a literary reflection of a temple incubation to obtain a revelatory dream, the Assyrian king designates himself the 'servant' of Nabû', whereas the god figures as his divine protector.[62] Esarhaddon (680-669 BCE) sang the praises of Nanaia whilst Sargon II (721-705 BCE) and Assurbanipal asked Nanaia for protection in hymns they addressed to her.[63] In one of his royal inscriptions Assurbanipal related that during one of his expeditions to Elam he had recaptured the cult statue of the goddess Nanaia. The king proclaimed that he took Nanaia by the hand and brought her back to Uruk where he placed her in the sanctuary that had been renovated by him.[64] We may assume that the cult statue had been stolen by the people of Elam and that Assurbanipal brought it back to its original cult centre. The returning of stolen cult statues is a well-attested motif in royal inscriptions of all times and must have been a suitable device by which the kings could win the sympathy of their subjects. Their reinstatement often resulted in a renaissance of the sanctuary, and Assurbanipal's act can therefore be interpreted as a deliberate effort to propagate Nanaia's cult. It goes without saying that Antiochus' reconstruction of Nabû's temple Ezida touched upon the cult of Nanaia as well.

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[55] Matsushima, "Problèmes des déesses Tašmetum et Nanaia", 133-148.

[56] VAT 17347 (rev. ll. 3-7). Cf. Lambert, "Divine Love Lyrics", 44-45; Matsushima, "Problèmes des déesses Tašmetum et Nanaia", 134-136. Another Old Babylonian hymn, VS 10 no. 215, composed in honour of King Samsuiluna (1749-1712 BCE) first celebrates the power of the goddess (ll. 17-24), and concludes with a request to the goddess to assure the king a long life (rev. ll. 21-24).

[57] Ebeling, *Keilschriftexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts*, 158. II, ll. 23-26.

[58] Matsushima, "Problèmes des déesses Tašmetum et Nanaia", 138-140.

[59] Heimpel, "Catalog of Near Eastern Venus Deities", 16.

[60] Pomponio, *Nabû*, 77-98, for references.

[61] M.-J. Seux, *Epithètes royales akkadiennes et sumeriennes* (Paris 1967), 372.

[62] The text, catalogued as K. 1285, was first published by J. A. Craig, *Assyrian and Babylonian Religious Texts*, vol. 1 (Leipzig 1895), 5-6. For a recent translation see K. Hecker, *Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments*, vol. 2.1 (ed. O. Kaiser; Gütersloh 1986), 63-65.

[63] Borger, *Inschriften Asarhaddons*, pars. 49-50.

Apollo and Artemis and the Seleucid kings

The Greek couple Apollo and Artemis fulfilled the same role for the Seleucid monarchs as Nabû and Nanaia did for the Babylonian rulers. The predominant position of Apollo in the cult and worship of the Seleucid rulers is well known, and the claim of the Seleucid rulers to descend from the god through the founder of their dynasty, Seleucus I (306-280 BCE), expressed by Apollo's epithet ἀρχηγός τοῦ γένους, is well attested.[65] The belief that Apollo was Seleucus' father may have already existed during the last years of Seleucus' life.[66] In an inscription from Ilion, dated about 281 BCE, Apollo is called the ἀρχηγός of Seleucus' family.[67] About the same time in Erythrai a prescription was added to a ritual law to sing the praises of Seleucus as son of Apollo during the sacrifices.[68] The idea was firmly rooted, at least at the beginning of the reign of his son Antiochus I Soter (280-261 BCE). In an inscription dealing with the major contributions of Antiochus to a sanctuary near ancient Troas, Apollo is considered to be the founder of the Seleucid dynasty.[69] About 246 BCE Seleucus II cites his συγγένεια with Apollo of Didyma as the motive for the support of Miletus by himself and his ancestors,[70] and an inscription dated to the reign of Antiochus III the Great (238-187 BCE) refers to Apollo as the founder god of the royal family.[71]

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[64] Streck, *Assurbanipal* (VAB 7/ II; Leipzig 1916), 174.

[65] See for the meaning and use of the epithet ἀρχηγός in the archaic and classical period: P. Lévêque and P. Vidal-Naquet, *Clisthène l'Athénien* (Paris 1964), 70-71.

[66] The thesis of A. Haussolier, *Etudes sur l' histoire de Milet* (Paris 1902), 126, that the belief only originated in the reign of Antiochus II, has long since been rejected by Stähelin, "Seleukos Nikator", col. 1232. Doubts that this belief dates back tot Seleucus' lifetime are expressed by A.

According to Libanius, Seleucus I founded the Apollo sanctuary at Daphne.[72] This temple was one of the most important sanctuaries of the ancient world well into the Common Era.[73] An important aspect of the cult at Daphne was that it was a royal cult, sponsored by the Seleucid sovereigns.[74] The king, not the city of Antioch, organized the festivities at the sanctuary, and the statues of the gods were installed or replaced at the king's orders.[75] After the Romans had forced Antiochus IV to end the war with Egypt in 168 BCE, the king personally mounted a gigantic procession at Daphne, a display of power that can be interpreted as a form of counter-propaganda, an attempt by Antiochus to reaffirm his reign.[76] It is highly significant that the event took place at Daphne, where the sanctuary of Apollo, which was very important to the dynasty, was located. Furthermore, we know that the cult at Daphne was particularly propagated by Antiochus III the Great, who in 189 BCE personally appointed the chief priest of the gods

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Mehl, *Seleukos Nikator und sein Reich, Teil* I: *Seleukos' Leben und die Entwicklung seiner Machtposition* (Studia Hellenistica 28; Leuven 1986), 5 and 304-305. Kuhrt and Sherwin-White, *From Samarkhand to Sardis*, 28, point to the predominant position of Apollo from the reign of Antiochus I onwards.

[67] *OGIS* no. 212, ll. 11-15: ..[τῆι δωδεκάτη]ι ἐν [τῶι μηνὶ] τῶι Σελευκε[ί]ωι στεφανίτην μουσικ[ὸν] καὶ γυ[μ]ικὸν καὶ ἱππικόν [ὡς καὶ τοῦ 'Απόλλωνος τ]ελεῖται τοῦ ἀρχηγοῦ τοῦ [γένους αὐτοῦ]. Until the battle of Kurupedion in 281 BCE, Ilion was part of Lysimachus' territory, so the inscription cannot be dated to before this year. Since the aim of the decree was to honour Seleucus for the liberation of the city, it was in all likelihood published during his lifetime: C. Habicht, *Gottmenschentum und griechische Städte* (Zetemata 14; Munich 1956), 82.

[68] F. Sokolowski, *Lois sacrées de l'Asie Mineure* (Paris 1955), no. 24 B, ll. 34: ὑμνεῖτε ἐπὶ σπονδαῖς Ἀπόλλωνος κυανοπλοκάμου παῖδα Σέλευκον, ὃν αὐτὸς γείνατο χρυ(σ)ολύρας.

[69] *OGIS* no. 219, ll. 25-28; εὔξασθαι δὲ καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους ἱερεῖς καὶ ἱερείας μετὰ τοῦ ἱερέως τοῦ βασιλέως τοῦ βασιλεώς Ἀντιόχου τῶι τε 'Απόλλωνι τῶι 'αρχηγ(ῶι) τοῦ γένους αὐτοῦ. For a discussion of the inscription see P. Frisch, *Die Inschriften von Ilion* (Inschriften Griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien 3; Bonn 1975), 84-91, no. 32.

[70] Welles, *Royal Correspondence*, 105-110, no. 22, ll. 2-5 (=*OGIS* 227) ...τῶν προγόνων ἡμῶν καὶ τοῦ πατρὸς πολλὰς καὶ μεγάλας εὐεργεσίας κατατεθειμένων εἰς τὴν ὑμετέραμ πόλιν διά τε τοὺς ἐγδεδομένους χρησμοὺς ἐκ τοῦ παρ' ὑμῖν ἱεροῦ τοῦ Διδυμέως Ἀπόλλωνος καὶ διὰ τὴν πρὸς αὐτὸν τὸν θεὸν συγγένειαν ἔτι δὲ καὶ διὰ τὴν τοῦ δήμου εὐχαριστίαν, ... Cf. Günther, *Orakel von Didyma*, 66-95.

[71] *OGIS* no. 237, l. 6; .. ἀρχηγέτης τοῦ γένους τῶν βασιλέων.

[72] Libanius, *Orat*. XI (*Αντιοκος*) 94-99. Sozomen (5.19 = PG 67.1273) also says that Seleucus built the temple of Apollo at Daphne, whereas Malalas (204. 9-16) reports that Seleucus planted a cypress near Apollo's temple: Downey, *Antioch*, 83, note 135.

[73] Downey, *Antioch*, 595; Drijvers, *Edessa*, 45. The temple and the cult statue were destroyed by lightning in 362 CE, for which the Christians were blamed.

[74] Bickerman, *Institutions des Séleucides*, 252; Drijvers, *Edessa*, 45 and 70-71; F. Cumont, "Inscriptions grecques trouvées à Suse II: Inscriptions de l'époque des Séleucides", *CRAI* 1931, 283.

[75] *OGIS*, no. 248, l. 32; Amm, Marc. XXII.13,1.

[76] Polyb. XXIX, 27 and XXX, 25, 2-26, 4. Cf. Kuhrt and Sherwin White, *From Samarkhand to Sardis*, 219-221.

worshipped there.[77] The king explains his personal involvement by pointing to the interest of both his ancestors and himself in the place.

Apollo's head had appeared from time to time on the bronze coinage of Seleucus I, but it was Antiochus I who introduced the seated Apollo motif on the reverse of his silver coinage of Syrian and Babylonian cities.[78] It is highly significant that Apollo to a large extent replaced Zeus, the god who had appeared most on the mints of Seleucus I.[79] Apollo remains the most frequently depicted deity on later Seleucid mintage, providing firm proof of his predominant position in the cult and worship of the Seleucids.[80] Both the epigraphic and numismatic evidence therefore show that from the reign of Antiochus I the cult of Apollo was officially propagated by the Seleucid rulers. The inscriptions show that the god owed his popularity first and foremost to his role as the founder of the Seleucid dynasty. His dominant presence on the coins can therefore be understood as an attempt by the Seleucid rulers to underline their kinship with Apollo and thereby presents a conscious effort to legitimate their rule.[81]

Whereas the Seleucid rulers systematically referred to their divine kinsman Apollo in order to legitimate their reign, Nabû traditionally served the Babylonian kings in a similar capacity. The Seleucid rulers adopted the Babylonian ideology of Nabû when they presented their kingship to the local population. The common function of both deities for the royal house may therefore be the ground for the identification made by Strabo. However, Strabo refers to Borsippa as the city of Apollo and Artemis. If it can be shown that the identification of Artemis with Nanaia can be explained on similar grounds, it would add weighth to the hypothesis of a Babylonian prototype.

Despite the fact that the worship by the Seleucids of the divine couple Apollo and Artemis is far less well documented than their cult of Apollo, instances are attested throughout the Seleucid Empire from the reign of Antiochus III onwards.[82] In an inscription from Xanthos, Lycia, dated about 197 BCE, Antiochus III stresses the family ties between himself and Leto, Apollo and Artemis, citing his kinship (συγγένεια) with these gods as the reason to dedicate the city to the three deities.[83] The worship by this king of the divine couple is also apparent from his letter concerning the appointment of the chief priest of Apollo and Artemis Δαιττῶν at Daphne in 189 BCE. [84] The fact that the king personally appointed the chief-priest of Apollo and Artemis *Daittae* makes it clear that the couple was officially venerated by the Seleucids in this dynastically important sanctuary, a joint worship confirmed by later sources.[85]

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[77] Below, note 84.

[78] E. T. Newell, *Coinage of the Eastern Seleucid Mints* (New York 1940), 58-60.

[79] Rightly stressed by Kuhrt and Sherwin-White, *From Samarkhand to Sardis*, 28. Seleucid seals and coins frequently picture an anchor from the reign of Seleucus onwards (see the tabular survey in E. T. Newell, *The Coinage of the Western Seleucid Mints from Seleucus to Antiochus III* (NS 4; New York 1941), and idem, *Eastern Seleucid Mints*. The anchor was later interpreted by Justin, XV 4,2 as a reference to Seleucus' divine ancestor. It is unlikely, however, that it already had this meaning during the reign of Seleucus I.

[80] Drijvers, *Edessa*, 71.

[81] Kuhrt and Sherwin-White, *From Samarkhand to Sardis*, 27-28.

The reading of the epithet Δαιττῶν was long suspected because it was the only instance of the title and no certain meaning could be given to it. The reading was confirmed through the discovery at Susa of an inscription dated 183 BCE in which the same epithet is bestowed on the gods.[86] In this inscription the soldier Calliphon makes a dedication to Apollo and Artemis Δαιτταῖς for the safety of King Seleucus IV and his queen Laodice. The fact that the dedication was made by a Seleucid soldier for the well-being of Seleucid rulers supports the hypothesis that Apollo and Artemis were the gods of the Seleucid dynasty. The joint veneration of Apollo and Artemis at Seleucid Susa is confirmed by the numismatic evidence from the city. Coins dating from the same period depict the joined heads of the two gods.[87] On coins from Seleucia on the Tigris dating from the reign of Antiochus III, the couple is depicted very similarly.[88]

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[82] In the present context it is not necessary to dwell on the worship of Artemis by the Seleucid house. The dynasty was of Macedonian origin and consequently many Olympian gods, including Artemis, played a prominent role in its religion: Bickerman, *Institutions des Séleucides*, 150.

[83] *OGIS* no. 746, ll. 4-6; *TAM* II, no. 266, p. 103; M. Holleaux, *Études d'épigraphie et d'histoire grecques,* vol. 3 (Paris 1942), 161: Βασιλεὺς [μέ]γ[α]ς [Ἀν]τ[ίο]χος ἀφιέρωσεν τὴν πόλ[ι]ν τῆι Λητῶι καὶ τῶι Ἀπό[λλ]ωνι κα[ὶ] τ[ῆι] Ἀρτέ[μι]δι διὰ τὴν πρὸς αὐτοὺς συν[ά]πτουσα[ν] συγγένεια[ν]. In Didymaean myth Didyma was the scene of Zeus' sexual union with Leto, from which Apollo and Artemis were born. The twins and their parents were considered to be the Didymaean family and were all worshipped there. The Seleucid kings showed great interest in the sanctuary at Didyma and hence it seems likely that the Didymaean situation is the ground for Antiochus' claim. It is important to note that the word συγγένεια which Antiochus uses to express his kinship with the gods, is also used by Seleucus II in his letter to Miletus when he speaks of the kinship of his father and ancestors with Apollo of Didyma (above, note 70).

[84] Welles, *Royal Correspondence*, 179-185, no. 44, ll. 21-28: ...τῆς ἀρχιερωσύνης τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος [κ]αὶ τῆς Ἀρτέμιδος τῶν Δαιττῶν καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἱερῶν ὧν τὰ τεμένη ἐστὶν ἐπὶ τῆς Δάφνης προσδεομένης ἀνδρὸς φίλου δ[υ]νησομένου δὲ προστῆναι ἀξίως τῆς ὑπὲρ τοῦ τόπου σπουδῆς ἣν ἔσχον οἵ τε πρόγονοι καὶ ἡμεῖς καὶ τῆς ἐξ ἡμῶν πρὸς τὸ θεῖον εὐσεβείας...

[85] Strabo, XI, 2. 6; Malalas, 243, 3-9. Translation: Jeffreys e.a. (ed.), *Chronicle of John Malalas*, 124. It is not clear whether Artemis was worshipped at Daphne from the beginning or whether her cult was introduced later, for sources for the early history of Daphne are scarce, the coins minted at the city being the only evidence at our disposal.

[86] Cumont, "Inscriptions grecques trouvées à Suse", 279-285, no. 1 (*SEG* VII (1934) , no. 17; L. Robert, "Sur les affranchissements de Suse. Etudes d'épigraphie grecque", *RP* III, X, (1936), 139; Βασιλεύοντος Σελεύκου, ἔτους λρ', μ(η)νὸ(ς) Δαισίου, ἐν Σελευκείαι (τ)ῆι πρὸς τῶι Εὐλαίωι ἀφιέρωσεν Καλλιφων Διοδώρου, φάμενος εἶ(ν)αι τῶν ὑπὸ Ἀλέξανδρον ἱππέων, Ἀπόλλωνι καὶ Ἀρτέμιδι Δαίτταις ὑπὲρ τῆς [Σε]λεύκου τοῦ βασιλέως καὶ Λ[αο]δίκης τῆς [βασιλ]ίσση[ς σωτηρίας ....]. The inscription from Susa has not clarified the meaning of the epithet. For several possible explanations compare Cumont, "Inscriptions grecques trouvées à Suse", 283.

A late instance testifying to the joint worship of Apollo and Artemis originates from Dura-Europos. In an inscription dated 3 CE from the temple of Artemis, a certain Abidnerglos makes a dedication to Artemis and Apollo ἀρχηγοῖς, the founder gods:[89]

> ἔτους διτ´ ἀνήγιρεν᾿Αβιδνήριγ(λος) Ζαβιδιλαίου᾿Αρτέμιδι καὶ᾿Απόλλωνι ἀρχηγοῖς ὑπὲρ τῆς αἰαυτοῦ ὑγίας καὶ τέκνων
>
> Year 314 (= 3 CE). Abidnerglos, the son of Zabidilos has erected (this) to Artemis and Apollo, the founder gods, for the well-being of himself and (his) children.

Despite the fact that the inscription bears a date from the Parthian period it is generally assumed that the Greek couple was introduced by the Macedonian settlers in Dura.[90] The fact that the epithet ἀρχηγός is given here to Apollo and Artemis indicates that the gods were jointly considered the founder gods of the Seleucids. Thus the inscriptions from Daphne, Susa and Dura-Europos show that Artemis and Apollo were considered to be the founders of the Seleucid dynasty throughout the Seleucid Empire, from the reign of Antiochus III onwards.

As the ancestors and patrons of the Seleucid kings, Apollo and Artemis fulfilled a similar role to that of Nabû and Nanaia for the Babylonian kings. The Seleucid kings adhered to the traditional meaning of Nabû and Nanaia for the royal house. In all likelihood, therefore, Strabo's ***interpretatio Graeca*** of the Babylonian gods results from the analogical function of the Greek and Babylonian couple for the reigning sovereign. Although it is impossible to establish the place and the moment at which this identification was first made with certainty, it is reasonable to suppose that it originated in Babylonia in the

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[87] Newell, *Eastern Seleucid Mints,* 134, no 376, and 136-137, Pl. XXVIII,12. Newell dates the coins to the reign of Seleucus II. G. Le Rider, *Susa sous les Séleucides et Parthes. Les trouvailles monétaires et l'histoire de la ville* (Paris 1965), no. 51, 61 and 289, proposes a date in the reign of Seleucus IV.

[88] Newell, *Western Seleucid Mints,* 22, no 250 A, and 292 and 400, pl. II,18; Le Rider, *Susa,* 131, no. 286.

[89] *TEAD* III, 63, D 161; K. Dijkstra, *Life and Loyalty,* 261-262.

[90] Rostovtzeff, *Dura-Europos and its Art,* 58; Eissfeldt, *Tempel und Kulte,* 116; Welles, "Gods of Doura-Europos", 52 and 54-55; Perkins, *Art of Dura-Europos,* 14.

Seleucid period. In all likelihood the Seleucid rulers propagated the analogical function of the Greek and Babylonian couple in order to legitimate their reign. Nabû's assimilation to the Greek god Apollo and his association with Artemis-Nanaia on the Palmyrene tesserae hence suggest that his cult was imported directly from Babylonia.

The Akitu festival and the ritual affiliation of Nabû and Bel in Palmyra

The Babylonian origin of Nabû's cult in Palmyra is supported by his affiliation with Bel, the city god of Palmyra. The connection between the cult of the two Babylonian gods is apparent from the location of Nabû's sanctuary in the proximity of Bel's temple. The link between the two temples is confirmed by several tesserae that associate Nabû with the major deities from the temple of Bel, viz. Bel, Iarḫibol and Aglibol.[91] In Dura-Europos the small statue of Nabû was found in the so-called 'temple of the Gaddê'. In the previous chapter the predominantly civic character of the cult in this Palmyrene sanctuary was established, in view of which it is to be expected that Nabû's association with the city god would provide part of the explanation for his presence in the temple at Dura-Europos. In the following I shall therefore concentrate upon the relationship between the two gods in the oasis.

The affiliation of Bel and Nabû in Palmyra tallies with the situation in Babylonia, where Nabû of Borsippa was closely connected with his father Marduk-Bel in Babylon. Their intimate relationship came especially to the fore in the celebration of the Akitu festival, the Babylonian New Year festival that hailed Marduk-Bel as the king of the gods and proclaimed Nabû as his legitimate successor. During the first centuries of the Common Era it was still celebrated in Palmyra, as is apparent from the consecration of the thalamos of Bel's temple to Bel, Iarḫibol and Aglibol on the sixth of Nisan of the year 32 CE, a date that coincided with the celebration of the Babylonian Akitu festival.[92] This is supported by a tessera that gave access to a sacred meal celebrated in Bel's honour on the occasion of the New Year.[93] More generally, Jean Cantineau pointed out the large number of Palmyrene inscriptions dated in Nisan, a fact that he connects with the Akitu festival.[94] Palmyra was not the only city in the region that had adopted the Babylonian festival; we know that it was also celebrated in Assur and Edessa during first centuries of the Common Era.[95] As in Babylon, Bel and Nabû were the leading figures of the Edessene New Year festival. The situation was very similar in Palmyra; the celebration of this originally Babylonian festival explains the alliance of the two gods in the oasis.

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[91] *RTP* nos. 119, 136 and 137 and C. Dunant, "Nouvelles tessères de Palmyre", *Syria* 36 (1959), nos 5, 6, and 26 (= correction of *RTP* no. 244).

[92] *PAT* no. 1347 (45 CE). In Babylonia it had been customary to dedicate or rededicate temples during the celebration of the Akitu festival: P. Beaulieu, *The Reign of Nabonidus, King of Babylon 556-539 B.C.* (New Haven 1989), 9-10. The fact that this tradition was also observed in Palmyra indicates that the festival was still celebrated there. For the most recent discussion of this festival in Palmyra and the remainder of Syria, see J. Tubach, "Das Akitu-Fest in Palmyra", *ARAM* 7 (1995), 121-135.

The relief depicting the battle of Bel and Nabû with Tiamat from the temple of Bel

The role of Bel and Nabû in the Palmyrene Akitu festival is apparent from a relief which decorated the peristyle of Bel's temple (fig. 19), depicting the battle between a deity on a chariot and another riding a horse with an ophidian monster.[96] The fight is attended by six other gods, standing in a row. It is among the best-known reliefs from Palmyra, for obvious reasons: not only is it a work of high quality and craftsmanship but it is also provides a unique insight into the mythology that formed the basis of the cult at Palmyra. As is well known, there are no literary sources from Palmyra to inform us about the mythology that was current in the oasis. Starting with Robert du Mesnil du Buisson, specialists in the art and religion of Palmyra have identified the scene as the battle of Bel and Tiamat, an episode from *Enuma elish*, the Babylonian epic of creation.[97]

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[93] *RTP* no. 63. The tessera reads *bl nysn*, 'Bel, (month of) Nisan'. For a brief discussion, see Teixidor, *Pantheon*, 50 and 109.

[94] J. Cantineau, "Tadmorea", *Syria* 14 (1933), 173.

[95] On the celebration of the Akitu festival in Edessa, see: Drijvers, *Edessa*, 43. The lasting popularity of the festival in Assur is apparent from a number of Aramaic inscriptions found in the north-western *iwan* of the Parthian building constructed above the former temple of Assur. They date from the early third century CE and are dedicated to Assur and his spouse Sherua. The majority of the dated texts were written in the period between eighth and eleventh of Nisan over a number of years: B. Aggoula, *Inscriptions et graffites araméens d'Assour* (Naples 1985), nos. 17a and 29k (8 Nisan), nos. 25b and 29i (9 Nisan), nos. 27b, 29b and 29h (10 Nisan), nos. 17b, 20, 23c, 25e, and 28 (11 Nisan). Nos. 27j and 29a dated Nisan, do not specify the exact date.

[96] Seyrig, *Temple de Bêl*, 87-88, pl. 44, Album 90; R. du Mesnil du Buisson, "Le bas-relief du combat de Bêl contre Tiamat dans le temple de Bêl à Palmyre", *AAAS* 26 (1976), 83-110. The following pages present a slightly altered version of my article "The Exaltation of Nabû. A Revision of the Relief depicting the Battle against Tiamat from the Temple of Bel in Palmyra", *Die Welt des Orients* 28 (1997), 96-116.

[97] Du Mesnil du Buisson, "Combat de Bêl contre Tiamat", 83-110, (a refinement of his earlier view, expressed in *TMP*, 247-251, where he argues for a combination of the Greek myth of Zeus and Typhon and the Babylonian battle of Marduk and Tiamat). Du Mesnil du Buisson's

Although the proposed interpretation can explain some motifs of the relief, many questions remain to be solved. This holds especially true for the identity of the attending deities and their relationship to Bel and his cult.[98] These enigmas result from an erroneous interpretation of the main protagonist of the scene, which I argue, depicts Nabû, not Bel, and attending figures who are related to the cult in Nabû's temple. The probability of this hypothesis increases when one takes into consideration the subject matter of two other reliefs that decorated the peristyle of Bel's temple. The back of the beam portraying the battle scene pictures the deities Aglibol and Malakbel in their sanctuary, the 'Sacred Wood' (fig. 17) Facing the battle was the relief depicting a procession with a camel (fig. 18). In chapter III I proposed that this event should be identified as the arrival of the goddess Allat in Palmyra. Since both reliefs are unrelated to the temple of Bel and refer to other Palmyrene sanctuaries it is reasonable to suppose that this holds true for the battle scene as well.

When it was found in 1934 the relief consisted of nine fragments. The left part is now lost, but we may rely on the detailed description offered by Henry Seyrig in the *editio princeps*.[99] According to this, the fragments that are now missing show a god clad in military costume, riding a chariot drawn by at least one horse. He carries a bow and is about to shoot an arrow at a monster shown in front of him, a hideous creature with a woman's body and legs consisting of several snakes. Hidden between them is a small naked figure. To the right of the monster's head a crater is depicted, from which rise four or five snakes. A warrior riding a horse advances towards the monster from the right. Like the figure riding the chariot, he wears military costume, but owing to the damage to the relief, his weapons are no longer discernible. Below the front legs of his horse a small dog runs towards the monster. To the right of the battle scene six figures are depicted standing in a row. All are pictured in a frontal position, in the hieratic posture so typical of the art of Palmyra. The first four figures are dressed in military outfits, each wearing a helmet and cuirass. The figure closest to the mounted warrior

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interpretation is followed by Drijvers, *Edessa*, 64-65; Gawlikowski, "Dieux de Palmyre", 2614-2615.

[98] Thus Du Mesnil du Buisson, "Combat de Bêl contre Tiamat", 86; Seyrig, *Temple de Bêl*, 88; Gawlikowski, "Dieux de Palmyre", 2615.

[99] Seyrig, "Bas-reliefs monumentaux",165-173, pl. XX and XXIV; idem, *Temple de Bêl*, 87. Starcky and Gawlikowski, *Palmyre*, 92, argue that these fragments do not belong to the relief because their dimensions do not match the other fragements. Unfortunately they do not substantiate their claim. In a more recent article, "Dieux de Palmyre", 2615, Gawlikowski does consider the fragments to be part of the battle scene. In view of the deficient information provided by the aforementioned publication, I follow Gawlikowski's most recent description.

carries a spear in its right hand, with a snake coiled around the spear. The deity next to him wears a short tunic over the cuirass, from which it may be deduced that this is a goddess.[100] In her right hand she carries a spear, on her left shoulder rests a bow. To the right of her feet a fish is depicted, moving towards a second fish which is depicted between the legs of the third military figure, who holds a spear in his left hand. A similar weapon is held by the fourth and last warrior god, who carries a small round shield as well. On his left stands the figure of a man leaning on a club; except for the lion skin draped over his left shoulder this figure is naked. The hem of a long robe is all that remains of the sixth and last figure. From this garment it can be deduced that we are dealing with a female figure here, clad in a Greek dress.

Enuma elish *and the Akitu festival*

The left-hand side of the relief is readily explained by ***Enuma elish***, the Babylonian creation myth designed to establish Marduk-Bel as king of the gods.[101] Parts of it were sung during the celebration of the Akitu festival in Babylon, a festival that was still observed in Palmyra; hence the epic may be used as an explanatory key to the scene.[102] In *Enuma elish* Marduk-Bel is heralded as the creator and ruler of the universe, to whom all cosmic phenomena are subject. It relates how Marduk was given power by Anu and Enlil, overcame the chaos monster Tiamat and thus created the ordered human world and the cosmos.[103] The god armed with the bow and riding the chariot recalls the description of Marduk-Bel carrying his flood weapon, riding the storm chariot drawn by four fierce horses. Like Tiamat in the Babylonian epic, the monster depicted on the Palmyrene relief is female. Despite these similarities, it is not an exact rendering of the Babylonian myth. On the Palmyrene relief Bel's chariot is drawn by one horse instead of four and Tiamat is represented with snake-tailed legs, whereas the Babylonian epic is silent in this respect.[104] The small figure entangled between Tiamat's 'legs' and the crater filled with snakes are not described in the Babylonian epic either.[105] These differences are readily explained by the fact that the Babylonian epic and the Palmyrene relief are separated by more than a thousand years. The general picture corresponds with the event described in

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[100] This military outfit is typical of the iconography of Allat-Athena. Hence the doubt about her female sex, expressed by Gawlikowski, "Dieux de Palmyre", 2641-2642, is groundless.

Enuma elish to such an extent that the differences do not interfere with the identification of this scene as the combat between Marduk-Bel and Tiamat.

However, the battle of Bel and Tiamat forms only a small part of the overall scene. The largest part of the relief is devoted to seven deities. Unfortunately, the attributes of the attending gods do not fully suffice for their identification. The deity riding the horse actively participates in the combat and appears to be as important as Bel himself. Bel's most important assistant carries no attributes by means of which he can be identified. Possibly he is escorted by the small dog running below his horse, but as far as we know no Palmyrene god is normally associated with this animal.[106] The deity next to him is probably Shadrafa, for

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[101] For the date of the epic, see below, note 111.

[102] The entire epic of creation was recited in the night of the fourth to the fifth of Nisan: C. Cagirgan, "The Babylonian Festivals" (Ph.D. Birmingham 1976), 20-21, 273-278; S. Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia. Creation, the Flood, Gilgamesh and Others* (Oxford 1989), 231. Parts of the epic may have been recited on the other days of the Akitu festival as well: Lambert, "The Great Battle", 189.

[103] Recent translations in English: Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia*, 228-277; B. R. Foster, *Before the Muses: an Anthology of Akkadian Literature*, vol. 1 (Bethesda 1993), 351-402. In German: W. G. Lambert, "Akkadische Hymnen und Epen. Enuma Elish", *Texte aus der Umwelt des Alte Testaments*, vol. 3.4 (ed. O. Kaiser; Güttersloh 1994), 565-602.

[104] Although in some respects the epic describes Tiamat in anthropomorphic terms, it is difficult to arrive at a precise picture of her. Some passages suggest that she was a kind of sea creature ('the salt waters were inside her'). This accords well with her name, which is derived from the word *tiamtum*, 'sea'. In the fourth century BCE, Berossus still refers to the Greek word *thalassa*, 'sea', in order to explain her name. The creature on the Palmyrene relief definitely alludes to a sea monster. Although her legs consist of snakes, she reminds us of a giant octopus. We do not know whether this motif was a Babylonian device or originated in Greek iconography. Cf.: B. Alster, "Tiamat", *DDD*, cols. 1634-1639; J. Black and A. Green, "Tiamat", *Gods, Demons and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia. An Illustrated Dictionary* (London 1992), 177; S. M. Burstein, *The* Babylonica *of Berossus* (SANE I. 5; Malibu 1978), 14.

[105] Perhaps the snakes symbolize Tiamat's creatures, described in the epic, tablet II. I am unable to find an explanation for the small figure between the snake-tailed legs of the monster. Perhaps he is Tiamat's lover, Qingu, although the figure looks more like her victim than her belligerent admirer. It is more likely that his presence is due to a Palmyrene interpretation of the myth. A similar figure, but dressed, is depicted beneath the feet of the goddess with a dog' (pl. XIX). This is not the only similarity to the relief from the temple of Bel, for the dog figures on the battle scene as well. Interestingly, the relief of 'the goddess with a dog' was found in the proximity of the temple of Nabû. Given the prominent role of Nabû in the battle-relief, discussed below, it is tempting to relate these motifs to the cult of this god. However, tantalizing though these similarities are, the evidence is too fragmentary to enable one to arrive at a conclusion.

[106] The dog is associated in Palmyra with a goddess, cf. the previous note. A relief from Diocletian's camp represents a man in Parthian dress and a dog at an altar: Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra*, pl. XV, 2, and 25, for references. In the iconography of Hatra, the dog is the animal of Nergal (cf. H. J. W. Drijvers, "Mithra at Hatra? Some Remarks on the Problem of Irano-Mesopotamian Syncretism", *Acta Iranica, Textes et Mémoires*, vol. 4 *Etudes Mithraiques* (Leiden-Tehran-Liège 1978), 178-179). It is, however, uncertain whether this was likewise the case in Palmyra. The relief referred to above does not provide firm proof in this respect.

other Palmyrene reliefs represent this god with a snake coiled around his spear.[107] The identity of the goddess to his right is less clear. The bow she carries is an attribute usually associated with the Greek goddess Artemis. However, in Palmyra Artemis is identified both with the Babylonian goddess Nanaia as well as with the Arab deity Allat, and consequently she may represent either of them.[108] If the fish depicted to the left of this goddess is her attribute, we have to reckon with a third candidate: the goddess Atargatis.[109] The god to her left has been identified as the son of Atargatis-Derceto, Poseidon or Ichthys, owing to the fish depicted between his legs. However, as there are no Palmyrene representations that substantiate these identifications it is better to leave the matter open. The god next to him is perhaps to be identified with the Arab god Arṣu, since this deity is frequently depicted with the small round shield which is typical of deities of the desert. The god equipped with the club and lion skin clearly represents Heracles, identified in Palmyra with the Babylonian god Nergal. Too little remains of the last goddess to arrive at an identification; several Palmyrene goddesses are depicted wearing a long Greek dress.

The ritual connection between Enuma elish *and the Akitu festival*

The attendant deities are at odds with the account of *Enuma elish*, which does not mention any deities accompanying Marduk-Bel. The slaying of Tiamat is emphatically described as a personal achievement of Marduk; it is this victory that exemplifies and justifies his supremacy. In spite of this, the accompanying deities do not contradict the identification of the relief as the battle against Tiamat. The presence of the other gods is explained by the dynamics of the myth, which result from the intimate relationship between the myth and the ritual of the Akitu festival. The Babylonian epic of creation did not stand alone but was part of the New Year festival, a ritual connection that had a bearing upon the visualization and interpretation of the myth. From a functional point of view, the festival was used to express and confirm the religious and/or political status quo.

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[107] As such identified on a Palmyrene relief dated 55 CE: J. Starcky, "Autour d'une dédicace palmyrénienne à Šadrafa et à Duᶜanat", *Syria* 26 (1949), 43-85, fig. 2; Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra*, pl. XLVIII. For a general discussion of this deity and further references, see Gawlikowski, "Dieux de Palmyre", 2646-2647.

[108] On the identification of Nanaia with Artemis, see above, 133-135. Allat is identified with Artemis in a Greek inscription on an altar from the temple of Allat dated 6 BCE: Drijvers, "Matre inter leones", 340, pl. LXXV.

[109] Proposed by Drijvers, "Matre inter leones", 347.

It represented current ideas, turned into religious practice: consequently the festival was dynamic and was adapted to local circumstances. At times the festival even played a major role in attempts to bring about religious change.[110] Since *Enuma elish* was part of these rituals, its interpretation changed as well. *Enuma elish* was a myth of legitimization, designed to position Marduk as the foremost of the gods and as such it is the expression of a religious change brought about by the end of the second millennium BCE.[111] Although the Akitu festival is older and has several independent dimensions, *Enuma elish* gives expression to the same basic issues and narrative themes as the first-millennium festival. Several of the events described in the epic allude to ritual enactments of the Akitu festival as celebrated in Babylon by the end of the second millennium BCE. However, since the epic was part of the practice of a living religion, its interpretation and contents changed.

An illustrative example of the adaptation of the Akitu festival and *Enuma elish* to local circumstances, and the bearing of the ritual upon the visualization of the myth, is provided by a scene on a set of doors donated by the Assyrian king Sennacherib to the Akitu house of Assur. These doors have not been preserved, but their decoration is described in the inscription that commemorates their foundation.[112] They pictured Assyria's national deity Assur advancing in his chariot in order to do battle against Tiamat. Assur was escorted by ten gods preceding his chariot and fifteen following. Like Assur, his companions were Assyrian deities, thereby making the scene a local adaptation of the Babylonian epic of creation. A slightly broken list of the same gods occurs on a late Assyrian ritual fragment which describes them as preceding Assur to the Akitu house.[113] Other lists describing the procession to the Akitu house in Assur distinguish between deities preceding Assur's chariot and those that follow.[114] All these deities were worshipped in the city of Assur and their position in the procession reflects their position in the local pantheon; those preceding Assur are less important than those that follow. The placement of the deities on the doors thus mirrors their participation in the Akitu procession.[115]

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[110] As was the case with Sennacherib, who brought the Akitu festival to Assur in order to herald the supremacy of the god Assur.

[111] In the course of the last sixty to seventy years various dates have been proposed for *Enuma elish*. At present, the majority of scholars agree with the view of W. G. Lambert, "The Reign of Nebukadnezzar I: A Turning Point in the History of Ancient Mesopotamian Religion", *The Seed of Wisdom. Essays ... T. J. Meek* (ed. W. S. McCullough; Toronto 1964), 3-13, according to whom the epic was composed during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar I (1125-1104 BCE), when Marduk was first publicly articulated as the head of the Babylonian pantheon. For a summary of this discussion, as well as a proposition for a later date, see T. Abusch, "Marduk", *DDD*, cols. 1014-1026.

[112] D. Luckenbill, *The Annals of Sennacherib* (Chicago 1924), VIII.b, 139-142.

[113] O. Schroeder, *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur verschiedene Inhalts* (Leipzig 1920), no. 49.

[114] Pongratz-Leisten, *Ina Šulmi Irub*, 115-128.

By analogy with the representation from Assur we may suppose that the Palmyrene relief illustrates a local adaptation of the Akitu myth, figuring Bel and several Palmyrene deities who played a part in the celebration of the Palmyrene Akitu festival. However, despite the fact that the majority of the attendant deities cannot be identified with certainty, it is clear that they are not those usually associated with Bel in his cult.[116] Most conspicuous is the absence of Bel's most important associates, the sun god Iarḫibol and the moon god Aglibol. After all, the new cella was not only dedicated to Bel, but to Iarḫibol and Aglibol as well.[117] From an iconographic point of view the deity riding the horse seems as important as Bel himself. The fact that in Palmyra the sun god Iarḫibol is the most important deity after Bel gives us reason to suppose that the mounted warrior is to be identified as such.[118] However, the absence of the radiant nimbus that invariably accompanies representations of Iarḫibol, as well as the fact that his companion Aglibol is not present among the other deities, makes this identification highly unlikely. The problem is solved if we suppose that not Bel but the deity riding the horse is the leading figure in this relief. It follows from the setting and subject of the relief that this deity was closely connected with Bel and played an important role in the Palmyrene version of the Akitu festival. Unfortunately, the sources are next to silent with respect to the Palmyrene festival. A discussion of the religious situation in Babylonia will therefore serve as the point of departure in the search for his identity; subsequently, a comparison will be made with the religious situation in Palmyra.

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[115] Lambert, "The Great Battle", 189. It is not necessary to conclude with Lambert that the epic of creation was re-enacted at the Akitu house. Cf. the critical remarks of Van der Toorn, "Babylonische nieuwjaarsfeest", 15 and 20.

[116] Already noted by Du Mesnil du Buisson, "Combat de Bêl contre Tiamat", 86; Seyrig, *Temple de Bêl,* 88. Gawlikowski, "Dieux de Palmyre", 2615, proposes that the relief should be seen as a reflection of the former hierarchy in the sanctuary. However, the group of deities is also incompatible with the deities who were associated with Bel in his old temple. Although little information is available on this period, it is clear that Iarḫibol was already associated with Bel before the Common Era.

[117] *PAT* no. 1347 (45 CE).

[118] Du Mesnil du Buisson, "Combat de Bêl contre Tiamat", 90 and fig 1, proposes that this deity should be identified as Iarḫibol. However, as he notes in the same article, 85, the iconography of the horseman is incompatible with Iarḫibol. Alternatively he therefore proposes to identify him as Azizu, in conformity with his earlier suggestion in *TMP*, 192-193. For the iconography of Iarḫibol, see Linant de Bellefonds, "Iarhibol", 624-626.

The exaltation of Nabû

Not long before the rise of the Late Babylonian Empire, Nabû had reached a position equal to his father's. [119] The fact that Marduk and Nabû were considered to be joint rulers of the pantheon and the universe is reflected in the Akitu festival as well.[120] Although Marduk was in the limelight at the festival, in the Neo-Babylonian period his son's importance had increased to such a degree that he had appropriated functions that had formerly been his father's prerogative. Nabû's eminent position came to the fore most clearly on the sixth day of the festival. In the temple of Ninurta, Nabû defeated the enemies of his father and presented them to him in Esagil.[121] On this day deities from the area around Babylon assembled in Esagil. According to a commentary text on *Enuma elish,* they have come to bring presents to Nabû and to accompany him in the procession to the Akitu chapel.[122] It is remarkable that Nabû figures as the most prominent deity in this commentary; the passage of *Enuma elish* describes the exaltation of Marduk by the assembly of the gods after his defeat of Tiamat and creation of the universe. Late Babylonian hymns addressed to Nabû connect the bringing of presents to Babylon with Nabû's victory over Tiamat.[123] A similar role in the Akitu ritual is described in the epic, which gives an account of Nabû's exaltation to equality with his father Marduk. It relates that Nabû went to the Akitu house with his father, insisted on performing the rites that were formerly executed by Marduk, and henceforth 'set his feet on the rolling sea' (Tiamat).[124]

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[119] Above, notes 8-10.

[120] Van der Toorn, "Babylonische nieuwjaarsfeest", 13 and 19.

[121] This interpretation is based upon a passage in 'the exaltation of Nabû'. Cf. the translation of this passage by Van der Toorn, "Babylonische nieuwjaarsfeest", 25, note 22 (in Dutch): 'He (i.e. Nabû) approached his begetter/ ..... he related to his father/ ... who revolted and he passed them before him [i.e. Marduk-Bel]'.

[122] T. G. Pinches, "The Legend of Merodach", *PSBA* 30 (1908), 80-82; vi (col. D) 1-14, ll. 4 and 10 [= BM 32654 and BM 38193]. A parallel can be found in the Assyrian commentary on *Enuma elish,* which states that 'from the sixth until the twelfth day are brought presents for Zababa'. K. 4657 (unpubl.) and SM 747 rev. 6 (=L. W. King, CT 13, pl. 32). In the Assyrian Akitu festival Zababa fulfils the role of Nabû. Cf. K. Deller and V. Donbatz, "Sanheribs Zababa-Tempel in Aššur", *BagM* 18 (1987), 221-228.

[123] Lambert, "Nabû Hymns", 95 = BM 34147 B 12 and BM 34710 B7.

[124] Ebeling, "Mittelassyrische Rezepte", pl. 26, 13. Cf. Lambert, "The Great Battle", 189-190.

Palmyra and the continuity of Babylonian tradition

The part played by Nabû in the slaying of Tiamat during the Akitu festival in the Neo-Babylonian period accords perfectly with the role fulfilled by the horseman on the Palmyrene relief from the temple of Bel. Given Nabû's Babylonian origin, his connection with Bel, and the prominence of his sanctuary in Palmyra, he is the most likely candidate for the cavalryman on the relief. As stated above, two of the reliefs that decorated the peristyle of the temple relate to prominent sanctuaries in the city of Palmyra. If the mounted deity is indeed to be identified as Nabû, this holds true for the battle scene as well. The fact that Nabû, rather than Bel, is the leading figure explains why the group of attendant deities are not recognizable as the traditional entourage of Bel. In all probability these gods are not connected with the temple of Bel, but with the cult in the temple of Nabû.[125] We have to wait for the publication of the final report on this temple in order fully to substantiate this hypothesis, but at present it can be shown that two of the deities from this group are related to Nabû. In conformity with Babylonian practice, Nabû was associated with the goddess Nanaia in Palmyra.[126] Nanaia is represented as the Greek goddess Artemis: hence the female deity with the bow on the battle-relief in all probability represents this Babylonian goddess. The second deity on the relief associated with Nabû is Heracles: Nabû and Heracles-Nergal appear together on tesserae from Palmyra.[127] The relationship between the two is confirmed by a relief depicting Heracles which was found in Nabû's temple.[128] The battle relief from the temple of Bel represents the slaying of Tiamat by Nabû and Bel. In this respect Palmyrene practice accords with the later Babylonian view, and as such exemplifies the diffusion and continuity of Babylonian culture and religion.

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[125] *RTP* no. 297, bears the inscription 'Nabû six'. Although this number can refer to almost anything, it is tempting to connect it with the sixth of Nisan, the day of Nabû's exaltation. The hypothesis that the festival of Nabû was celebrated in the month of Nisan is confirmed by a dedicatory inscription from his temple, dated in Nisan of the year 146 CE: Bounni, "Sanctuaire de Nabû", 157. The fact that it was customary to consecrate temples during the days on which the god's festival was celebrated contributes to the validity of this observation: *SB* III, 8.

[126] Above, 133-134

[127] *RTP* nos. 168 and 237.

[128] Bounni and Saliby, "Six nouveaux emplacements", 134, pl. X; Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra*, pl. XIII, 2.

Conclusion

The ritual connection between the cult of Nabû and Bel in Palmyra readily explains Nabû's presence in the temple of the Gaddê in Dura-Europos. The preeminent role of Nabû in the festival of Palmyra's city god accords well with the predominantly civic character of the cult of this sanctuary. The previous chapter established the predominantly civic meaning of the two Gaddê reliefs, and in this respect it is noteworthy that the two reliefs representing the Gaddê of Dura and Tadmor were dedicated in the month of Nisan, the same month in which the Akitu festival was celebrated in Palmyra.

CHAPTER SIX

THE CULT OF MALAKBEL

Instances of Palmyrene and Roman religious interaction

The Palmyrene sanctuary in Dura-Europos was called the temple of the Gaddê, after the deities on the two cult reliefs that were found in the *naos*. However, it is far from certain that the Gaddê depicted on these two reliefs were the main deities of the sanctuary. At the rear wall of the *naos* are the architectural remains of a central cult niche, flanked by two niches of about half the dimensions of the central niche. From this it may be inferred that originally three rather than two cult images were set up here. The width of the Gaddê reliefs tallies with the dimensions of the two outer niches, suggesting that the tutelary god of the temple was represented on a larger cult relief or painting that once occupied the central cult niche.[1] The hypothesis that the two Gaddê were not the main deities of the sanctuary is supported by a painting from the *pronaos* of the 'temple of the Palmyrene gods', which pictures the tribune of the Cohors XX Palmyrenorum and several of his men paying homage to three Palmyrene deities and the tutelary deities of Dura and Palmyra (pl. XIII). It is clear that the three gods occupy the most prominent position. The two Tychai are represented below the gods on a second plan and function as attendants.[2]

Next to the Gaddê reliefs several relief fragments were found in the *naos*. By analogy with reliefs from Palmyra and Rome, they can be reconstructed as a representation of the Palmyrene god Malakbel in a wagon drawn by griffins.[3] Frank Brown, the archaeologist in charge of the excavations of the sanctuary, suggested that this relief occupied the central cult niche. Following Brown, most scholars assume that Malakbel was the tutelary deity of the Palmyrene sanctuary in Dura-Europos, defending their hypothesis by pointing out the prominent role of Malakbel in the cult of other Palmyrene expatriates.[4]

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[1] Appendix, 253.

[2] Cumont, *Fouilles*, 96 and 99, suggests that the two Tychai are cult images in the true sense of the word, and that their statues were placed in the temple of the Palmyrene gods. The composition of the scene suggests rather that they are symbolic of the garrison town and of the nominal mother city of the troops, instead of actual deities receiving a share of the act of worship. In this respect they differ from the deities depicted on two cult reliefs from the temple of the Gaddê: A. D. Nock, "The Roman Army and the Roman Religious Year", *HTR* 45 (1952), 199, note 4.

[3] Appendix, 251-256.

The archaeological evidence is not conclusive, however: not only is it questionable whether the relief which pictures Malakbel should be interpreted as central, but there is no firm proof that it is contemporary with the two other reliefs, either. It follows from the dimensions of the figures represented on the fragments that the size of this relief did not differ significantly from the two Gaddê reliefs. There are no grounds, therefore, for asuming that it occupied a central position. It is equally possible to assume that one of the two Gaddê reliefs occupied the most prominent position in the centre.[5] Nor does the style of the fragments necessarily imply that the Malakbel relief was produced simultaneously with the two Gaddê reliefs. Furthermore, the differing head-dress of one of the figures suggests that it was not dedicated by the same individual as the other two. Hence the two Gaddê reliefs and the relief figuring Malakbel may have been fabricated separately.

This chapter aims to test the hypothesis that Malakbel was the tutelary deity of the temple of the Gaddê in Dura-Europos. In order to establish Malakbel's role in this sanctuary, the situation in Dura-Europos is related to the cult of Malakbel in Palmyra and among other Palmyrene expatriates. It is to be expected that the god who was represented on the central relief is related to the flanking reliefs of the Gaddê. Chapter IV concluded that the two Gaddê exemplified a civic aspect of the religion of Palmyra and Dura-Europos respectively: in all probability, therefore, the cult of the tutelary deity of this sanctuary was likewise of a municipal character. By studying Malakbel's position in the religion of Palmyra, I aim to discover whether it is plausible that Malakbel's cult had a civic connotation in Dura-Europos. Subsequently we shall turn to Malakbel's role in the religion of Palmyrene expatriates. The popularity of this god outside Palmyra is frequently cited in support of his eminent position in the temple of the Gaddê. In order to establish whether this material is admissible as evidence, we shall consider the social context of Malakbel's cult abroad and compare this to the situation in the temple of the Gaddê around the middle of the second century CE.

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[4] *TMP*, 270; M. Gawlikowski, "A propos des reliefs du temple des Gaddê à Doura", *Berytus* 18 (1969), 107; Perkins, *Art of Dura-Europos*, 72; *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 21; Equini-Schneider, "Santuario di Bel, 81. Colledge, *Art of Palmyra*, 227, is more cautious. The article by Du Mesnil du Buisson (below, note 5), is the only (printed) exception to this rule.

[5] This was suggested by R. du Mesnil du Buisson, "Review of M. Gawlikowski, 'A propos des reliefs du temple des Gaddê à Doura', *Berytus* 18 (1969), 105-109", *BiOr* 29 (1972), 201-204. Arguing from the composition of the three reliefs, Du Mesnil du Buisson proposes that the relief representing the Gad of Dura occupied the central position. However, according to this author, the Gad of Dura has to be identified as the Palmyrene god Baalshamin. In my view it is extremely unlikely that a Palmyrene god functioned as the tutelary deity of a Palmyrene sanctuary in Dura-Europos. Instead, I propose that the Gad should be identified as a local Zeus. Cf. above, Chapter IV, 117-119.

The cult of Malakbel in Palmyra

The material that testifies to the cult of Malakbel in Palmyra consists of inscriptions and representations and is comparatively abundant. Nevertheless, we have an ill-defined idea of the origin, character and cult of this Palmyrene god. Malakbel's name is generally taken to mean 'messenger of Bel', implying that he was considered a kind of representative of Bel.[6] It follows from the element 'Bel' that the name post-dates the introduction of Bel in the oasis. However, the fairly late origin of his name does not necessarily imply that the god himself was a late introduction. Malakbel is not a proper personal name, but a functional designation that was certainly not the god's original name: hence it may just as well conceal an indigenous deity.

Although Malakbel's name suggests that he once functioned as Bel's herald, he no longer has an overt cultic affiliation with Bel in the Common Era, but is instead attested in four combinations of deities.[7] Once, he occurs in isolation. These five manifestations of the god contribute greatly to the obscurity of his character. Malakbel's rank and iconography vary in the different groupings, suggesting that the god's function and character changed according to his divine associates. In order to determine Malakbel's significance in the religion of Palmyra, we shall first focus upon his different manifestations.

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[6] The etymology *mlʾk bl*, 'messenger of Bel', is also suggested by the Greek and Latin transcription of the name as Μαλαχιβηλ (*PAT* nos. 0247 (236 CE) and 0273 (140 CE)), and Malachibelo (*CIL*, VI 31036). The absence of the *alef* is explained by the fact that this Phoenician word is transcribed in an Aramaic dialect in which the root *lʾk*, 'to send', is not known (cf. *PAT* no. 0460, with the writing *mlkʾ*): Milik, *Dédicaces*,, 35-36, and 195. This interpretation is generally accepted among modern scholars: Gawlikowski, "Dieux de Palmyre", 2616 and 2634, for references. However, Février, *Religion*, 67, rightly points to the possibility that the Greek and Roman transcription of the name may reflect a later interpretation of the original name. Others have explained the name as *mlkʾ bl*, 'Bel is king', as an Aramaic transcription of the Phoenician divine name Milkbaal, or as a composite of two divine names, Malak and Bel. Cf. H. Seyrig, "Iconographie de Malakbêl", *Syria* 18 (1937), 198-199, notes 2-5, for a discussion of these options and literary references.

[7] There is only one instance on which Bel and Malakbel occur together. A relief from Wadi ᶜArafa in the Palmyrène represents six deities who are identified by the accompanying inscription as Astarte, Aglibol, Malakbel, Bel, Baalshamin, Nemesis, Arṣu and Abgal: Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra*, pl. X, 2; *PAT* no. 1568 (153 CE).

Malakbel and Aglibol in the 'Sacred Wood'

The best known of these manifestations is the cult of Malakbel in the 'Sacred Wood', the sanctuary administered by the Bene Komare, one of the four 'tribes' of Palmyra. As this was one of the oldest and most prominent sanctuaries in Palmyra, it is likely that the oldest manifestation of Malakbel can be found here. Malakbel was associated in the 'Sacred Wood' with the god Aglibol, who was the more important of the two. The texts invariably mention him before Malakbel and on most representations Aglibol occupies the more important position on the right, a pre-eminence confirmed by the fact that he is a member of the triad of Bel. Our primary source for the reconstruction of the characters of Aglibol and Malakbel consist of figural representations, the most informative of which is the relief from the temple of Bel which depicts the divine couple in the 'Sacred Wood' (fig. 17). In the Common Era, Aglibol is invariably represented as a military deity with a crescent. Malakbel's iconography is less definite and provides little clue about his character. Despite the fact that Aglibol was a moon god, there are no indications that Malakbel was a solar deity.[8] When represented with Aglibol, Malakbel wears local dress. There is no solar crescent. Hence the main iconographic features characterizing Palmyrene sun gods are absent: instead, several motifs suggest that Malakbel's cult was of a vegetative character.[9] A cypress played a prominent role in the cult of the 'Sacred Wood', and the two altars depicted on the relief from the temple of Bel are provided with fruit and decorated with a goat. On one tessera Malakbel is depicted carrying a sickle.[10]

Malakbel and Gad Taimi

The second group of manifestations is known from seven tesserae which associate Malakbel with Gad Taimi.[11] One inscription mentions this pair along with

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[8] Seyrig, "Iconographie de Malakbêl", 201-202, followed by Gawlikowski, "Dieux de Palmyre", 2636. The solar character attributed to this god by Teixidor, ***Pantheon***, 34-52, must be dismissed.

[9] First proposed by Seyrig, "Iconographie de Malakbêl", 202; followed by Equini Schneider, "Santuario di Bel", 77-78; Gawlikowski, "Dieux de Palmyre", 2635. The major piece of evidence in this respect does not come from Palmyra but from Rome. One of the reliefs that decorates the famous altar dedicated to Sol Sanctissimus-Malakbel depicts a child-god rising from a cypress, carrying a lamb over his shoulders. However, it is far from certain that this figure should be identified as Malakbel. Cf. below, note 75.

[10] *RTP* no. 155.

[11] *RTP* nos. 274-280.

Atargatis.[12] The temple of Atargatis, one of the four sanctuaries of Palmyra, was in all likelihood administered by the Bene Mita. Hence Malakbel and Gad Taimi were συνναοί θεοὶ in this prominent Palmyrene temple. Gad Taimi was the tutelary deity of the Bene Bonna, a clan of the Bene Mita.[13] Although the connection between Gad Taimi and Malakbel is expressed both with and without a conjunctive, it is unlikely that Malakbel functioned as the Gad of Taimi. The inscription in which they are associated with Atargatis clearly distinguishes them. Furthermore, three tesserae that picture Gad Taimi as a goddess with mural crown represent Malakbel on the reverse.[14] When associated with Gad Taimi, Malakbel is wearing a Parthian costume and is depicted without a solar crescent. Several instances depict him carrying a sickle.[15] The same features are to be found with Malakbel in the 'Sacred Wood': in all probability, therefore, Malakbel was also a fertility god in the cult of the Bene Mita.

Malakbel in the temple of Baalshamin

Apart from his role in the ancestral cults of the Bene Komare and the Bene Mita, Malakbel was much worshipped by the Arab population living in Palmyra and in the villages in its territory. In Palmyra the god was especially popular in the western or Arab quarter of the city, the religious organization of which was characterized by the existence of two sanctuaries, that of Baalshamin and that of Allat, both administered by the Bene Ma^{c}zin.[16] In the sanctuary of Baalshamin a small altar was found which a certain Maliku had dedicated to Malakbel.[17] Three sides of this personal monument are adorned with reliefs, the style of which suggests a date around the middle of the first century CE.[18] The front of the altar represents Malakbel in a chariot drawn by two griffins (pl. XXIII). The god is clad in civilian dress and has something resembling a scroll in his left hand. Maliku, the dedicant of the relief, is standing in front of the chariot. The two sides of the altar represent Allat and Sha^{c}du respectively, both typical Arab deities whose presence confirms Malakbel's popularity in an Arab setting.

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[12] *PAT* no. 0273 (140 CE).

[13] Milik, *Dédicaces*, 73.

[14] *RTP* nos. 277, 278, 280.

[15] *RTP* nos. 274 and 278.

[16] Above, Chapter III, 78.

[17] *PAT* no. 0181 (n.d.).

[18] *SB I,* 222; *SB* II, pls. LIX and CVIII, 1, 2, 3; Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra*, pls. XLIV and XLV, 1, 2.

The representation of Malakbel in a wagon drawn by griffins is well known. A similar scene is represented on the left-hand side of an altar from Rome dating from the beginning of the second century CE (pl. XXII).[19] On the basis of these two reliefs the fragments from the temple of the Gaddê in Dura-Europos could likewise be restored as a representation of Malakbel. Two tesserae from Palmyra representing a deity in a quadriga drawn by griffins probably depict the same god.[20] It follows from its wide dissemination that this representation was not especially designed for the small altar from the temple of Baalshamin, but may be assumed to be a copy an important cult image. Although firm proof to this effect is missing, it seems most reasonable to locate this prototype in the god's most important cult centre, the 'Sacred Wood'. The correlation between the god in the chariot and the god who functions as Aglibol's companion in the 'Sacred Wood', is possibly supported by a relief from Khirbet Ramadane in the Palmyrène which depicts the tutelary deities of the 'Sacred Wood' shaking hands (pl. XVIII). In his left hand Malakbel is holding an object which should probably be identified as a scroll, recalling the object that Malakbel is holding in his hand on the relief on the altar from the temple of Baalshamin.

The meaning of the scene and its implications for the god's character are problematic. By analogy with the relief on the altar from Rome, it has frequently been identified as a representation of the sun god in his chariot.[21] However, although the solar character of the god on the Roman altar is probable, it is dubious whether this was the original meaning of the scene in Palmyra. On the altar from the temple of Baalshamin the god is represented without a nimbus, an absence incompatible with the iconography of solar deities in Palmyra.[22] Furthermore, although griffins have a solar meaning in the Hellenistic and Roman world, this is not the case in the East, where they traditionally serve in the capacity of apotropaic demons or are related to fertility cults.[23] In Assyrian art griffins often appear in association with the 'sacred tree', and representations on Akkadian seals picture griffins drawing the chariot of a storm god, in all likelihood Adad.[24] The fact that Aphlad, the son of Adad, is standing on griffins on a relief from Dura-Europos dated in 54 CE, points towards a continuity of this tradition.[25] In Palmyra, the fragments of two sculptured plinths, dating from the beginning of the first century CE, represent a deity flanked by griffins.[26] This god is normally identified as Malakbel.[27] Although this is far from certain, it is significant that the god is represented without a radiant nimbus: in this respect he resembles Malakbel in his griffin-chariot.

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[19] Cf. the discussion of this monument, below, 175-181.

[20] *RTP* nos. 268-269.

[21] *TMP*, 269; J. Wais, "Problemy ikonografii Malakbela", *Studia Palmyrénskie* 4 (Warsaw 1970), 61; Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra*, 18; Equini-Schneider, "Il santuario di Bel", 78.

[22] H. Seyrig, "Culte du Soleil", 349-353, for a discussion of the iconography of solar deities attested in Palmyra.

[23] E. van Buren, "The Dragon in Ancient Mesopotamia", *Orientalia* 15 (1946), 14 and 45; J. Börker-Klähn, "Greif", *RLA* III (1971), 633-639; I. Flagge, *Untersuchungen zur Bedeutung des Greifen* (Sankt Augustin 1975), 83-100; F. A. M. Wiggermann, *Babylonian Protective Spirits The Ritual Texts* (CM 1; Groningen 1992), 75-76. Contra H. Prinz and Ziegler, "Gryps", PW VII, (1912), cols. 1907 and 1925; A. Fürtwängler, "Gryps", *Roscher's Lexicon* I, col. 1770; F.

The interpretation of griffins as fertility symbols fits much better with the vegetative character of Malakbel's cult in the 'Sacred Wood' and in the temple of Atargatis, which may be taken as the oldest aspect of the god in the oasis. Originally, therefore, the image of Malakbel in the chariot did not have a solar meaning. Alternatively, the scene may be interpreted as Malakbel in his capacity as messenger of the storm god.[28] It is plausible, however, that Western influence did eventually endow the scene with a solar meaning. This was definitely the case in Rome, and there is evidence which suggests that the same reinterpretation occurred in Palmyra. The two tesserae which depict a god in a chariot drawn by griffins picture a radiant deity on the reverse. If the two sides are related, it follows that the griffin-chariot had a solar significance. However, it is not likely that this was already the case as regards the altar from the temple of Baalshamin.

Cumont, *Etudes syriennes* (Paris 1917), 94; Y. Hajjar, *La triade de Héliopolis-Baalbek*, vol. 1 (EPRO 59; Leiden 1977), 382-383, note 4.

[24] H. Frankfort, *The Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient* (4th edition, London 1970), 135; Börker-Klähn, "Greif", 636.

[25] *TEAD* V, 106-112, pl. XIII.

[26] H. Seyrig, "Sculptures palmyréniennes archaïques", *Syria* 22 (1941), 39-44, pls. II-III; *TMP*, 117-121; Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra*, pl. XXIV, 1-2; Gawlikowski, "Dieux de Palmyre", 2635, figs. 30-31. One plinth pictures a deity flanked by goats in the upper register, the second represents a solar deity flanked by eagles in the lower register. According to most authors all three gods represent Malakbel. The god flanked by the griffins is thought to refer to the vegetative aspect of the god, whereas the god with the radiant nimbus flanked by eagles is thought to present Malakbel in his capacity as a solar deity.

[27] H. Seyrig, "Questions héliopolitaines", *Syria* 31 (1954), 85, note 3; *TMP*, 269; Wais, "Problemy ikonografii Malakbela", 60-61; Gawlikowski, *Temple*, 56, and idem, "Dieux de Palmyre", 2635; Equini-Schneider, "Il santuario di Bel", 78. Compare, however, the original cautious position of Seyrig, "Sculptures palmyréniennes archaïques", 43-44.

[28] Gawlikowski, "Dieux de Palmyre", 2636.

Malakbel in the triad of Baalshamin

A third group of monuments associate Malakbel and Aglibol with the god Baalshamin. Although all instances of this so-called 'triad of Baalshamin' were found in the Palmyrène, they probably mirror the cultic organization in the western quarter of Palmyra.[29] The iconography of this group closely resembles the triad of Bel and pictures Baalshamin flanked by a lunar and a solar deity, identified as Aglibol and Malakbel respectively.[30] As in the triad of Bel, the companions of Baalshamin are wearing military costume. Thus, in contrast to his appearance in the 'Sacred Wood' and on the tesserae, Malakbel is depicted as a soldier, with a solar crescent. The group of Baalshamin is distinguished from the so-called 'triad of Bel', though, by the differing positions of the solar and the lunar god. The sun god Iarḥibol occupies the most prominent position on Bel's right, whereas in the triad of Baalshamin the moon god Aglibol takes this place. Thus, whereas the sun god Iarḥibol outshines Aglibol in the triad of Bel, Aglibol is superior to the sun god Malakbel in the group of Baalshamin.

Despite the fact that all instances of this group were found in Palmyra's hinterland, there are several factors from which it may be inferred that the group originated in Palmyra and mirrors the religious organization of the oasis proper. Aglibol and Malakbel are a distinctively Palmyrene pairing who of old were the objects of a cult in the 'Sacred Wood'. Aglibol's pre-eminence over Malakbel must be the result of the hierarchy in this sanctuary, for the superiority of the moon god over the sun god is difficult to explain within an Arab milieu.[31] The Palmyrene origin of this group is rendered likely by the fact that the deities who accompany them on several reliefs are likewise gods who possessed important cult centres in the oasis. The fact that the 'Anonymous God', a deity who is generally considered to be an aspect of Baalshamin, is associated with Aglibol and Malakbel in Palmyra, likewise favours the Palmyrene origin of the Baalshamin, Aglibol and Malakbel grouping.

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[29] Contra Gawlikowski, "Dieux de Palmyre", 2631 and 2636, who suggests that the group originated in the Palmyrène. His argument that the Baalshamin of this formation should be distinguished from the Palmyrene god, and presents an aspect of the god that is related to the Arab milieu of the steppe, is not convincing in view of the Palmyrene character of the formation..

[30] Initially, this combination of deities was called 'the triad of the Anonymous God': Seyrig, "Hiérarchie des divinités", 190-195. Only later were they considered the triad of Baalshamin: Seyrig, "Nouveaux monuments palmyréniens des cultes de Bêl et de Baalshamîn", *Syria* 14 (1933), 31-34; idem, "Bêl de Palmyre", *Syria* 48 (1971), 94, note 2 (where representations of the triad of the 'Anonymous God' are cited as examples of the triad of Baalshamin). In total six reliefs are known which probably represent Baalshamin with Aglibol and Malakbel. Three reliefs represent the group in isolation: a relief that was found in Bir Wereb which is presently at the Louvre in Paris: Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra*, pl. XXXIV. The inscriptions were added at a later date: *PAT* nos. 2794-2799 (228 CE). The two others, both of unknown provenance, are anepigraphic: Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra*, pls. XXXVII, 1, and XXXV. The identification of the deities on the latter relief as the group of Baalshamin is problematic. The god in the centre is bearded and wears a *calathos*, which suggests that he should be identified as Baalshamin. However, the moon god is depicted on his left instead of on his right. Three other reliefs picture Baalshamin, Aglibol and Malakbel with other deities. A relief from Wadi ᶜArafa: *op. cit.*, pl. X, 2; *PAT* no. 1568 (153 CE). A fragment of a relief from Khirbet Leqteir: *op. cit.*, pl. XXXVII, 2. Another relief from the Palmyrène, the exact provenance of which is not known: *op. cit.*, pl. XXXVI.

According to Henry Seyrig, the group of Baalshamin was created for the temple of Baalshamin by analogy with the triad of Bel in the first half of the first century CE.[32] This hypothesis rests upon iconographic evidence and is not supported by the inscriptions from Baalshamin's temple. The lintel which belonged to the original cult niche of the temple represents an eagle with outstretched wings. Under its right wing is the bust of a moon god and under its left the bust of a sun god. It closely resembles the lintel from the cult niche of the temple of Bel, which is a symbolic representation of the triad of Bel: consequently Seyrig assumes that the monument from the temple of Baalshamin must be a representation of the triad of Baalshamin. However, in contrast to the triad of Bel, the presumed triad of Baalshamin is not related to the cultic organization of the sanctuary. Inscriptions from Baalshamin's sanctuary invariably mention the god alone or associate him with deities other than Aglibol and Malakbel. Duraḫlun, Raḥim and Belti are the most important attendant gods venerated in this sanctuary.[33] In all likelihood, therefore, the lintel does not represent Baalshamin with Aglibol and Malakbel, and the monument should rather be interpreted as a symbolic representation of the cosmic supremacy of the 'lord of heavens'.[34]

Although Baalshamin did not constitute a triad with Aglibol and Malakbel in his temple, it is clear that this divine pair was popular in the north-western quarter of the city, the neighbourhood in which the temple of Baalshamin was located.

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[31] Seyrig, "Iconographie de Malakbêl", 202.

[32] Seyrig, "Nouveaux monuments palmyréniens", 31-34, and idem, "Bêl de Palmyre", 94, note 2. Seyrig's interpretation is accepted by all subsequent authors, with the exception of E. T. Milik and M. Gawlikowski (cf. below, notes 33 and 34).

[33] Milik, *Dédicaces*, 95-98, with references to the relevant inscriptions. To these can be added the recently published inscription from the temple of Allat, which lists Baalshamin, Duraḫlun and Belti as the three main deities of this sanctuary: Drijvers, "Inscriptions from Allât's Sanctuary", 111-113, pls. I-II. In view of the evidence from inscriptions, Milik, *op. cit.*, 97, rejects the identification of the lintel as a representation of Baalshamin, Aglibol and Malakbel and instead opts for a triad consisting of Baalshamin, Duraḫlun and Raḥim.

[34] Starcky and Gawlikowski, *Palmyre,* 101 (but compare the rival opinion of J. Starcky, *op. cit.* 174, note 43); Gawlikowski and MPietrzykowski, "Sculptures du temple de Baalshamîn", 447-448; Gawlikowski, "Dieux de Palmyre", 2628-2631.

Aglibol and Malakbel were the tutelary deities of a sacred grove located in this area and several lamps showing their image were found in this part of town.[35] The goddess Allat, the tutelary goddess of a second temple administered by the Bene Ma^{c}zin, is frequently associated with the group of Baalshamin on the reliefs from the Palmyrène, substantiating the hypothesis that these reliefs mirror the religious organization of the western quarter.[36] The Bene Ma^{c}zin were closely connected with the predominantly Arab population living in Palmyra's territory, and the origin of the group of Baalshamin in their quarter thus readily explains its popularity in the Palmyrène. I therefore propose that the triad of Baalshamin should be interpreted as a reflection of the cultic organization in this predominantly Arab quarter.

The point at which Aglibol and Malakbel became associated with Baalshamin can no longer be established with certainty, but the evidence suggests that we are dealing with a fairly late phenomenon. The cult of Aglibol and Malakbel in the 'Sacred Wood' is certainly older than their association with Baalshamin.[37] The pre-eminence of the moon god Aglibol over the sun god Malakbel definitely results from the divine hierarchy in this sanctuary; hence Baalshamin's attendants were presumably borrowed from the 'Sacred Wood'. When depicted alongside Aglibol in the 'Sacred Wood' or with Gad Taimi on the tesserae, Malakbel wears a Parthian dress and the solar nimbus is absent. Both the militarization of Malakbel's costume and his solarization are therefore innovations that are inextricably bound up with his association with Baalshamin. Both features testify to Arab influences, which accords well with my hypothesis that the group of Baalshamin originated in the Arab quarter of Palmyra during the second half of the first century, or the first half of the second century CE.[38]

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[35] *PAT* no. 1944 (n.d.; second century CE), and Gawlikowski, *Temple*, 99 and 111. The relationship between Baalshamin and Aglibol is confirmed by a terracotta medallion. It pictures the moon god, but is dedicated to Baalshamin: Drijvers, ***Religion of Palmyra***, pl. XVII, and Gawlikowski, *Semitica* 23 (1973), 121-123 (inscription).

[36] The goddess is present on all three reliefs which associate the triad of Baalshamin with other Palmyrene deities (once she is equated with Nemesis; cf. above, note 30).

[37] Seyrig, "Iconographie de Malakbêl", 198-202; Seyrig, "Questions héliopolitaines", 85, note 3; Gawlikowski, "Dieux de Palmyre", 2634.

[38] Gawlikowski, "Dieux de Palmyre", 2636.

Malakbel in the triad of the 'Anonymous God'

A fourth group associates Aglibol and Malakbel with the 'Anonymous God', alias 'he whose name is blessed for ever', ***bryk šmh lʿlmʾ***.[39] The 'Anonymous God' is once explicitly associated with Aglibol and Malakbel;[40] two inscriptions associate this deity with the 'holy brothers' and a third mentions his 'messengers' (***mlkʾ***).[41] A relief on an altar dedicated to the 'Anonymous God' in 240 CE depicts the busts of three deities: a veiled Zeus-like figure in the centre, with a radiant god on either side, who in all probability should be identified as the 'holy brothers', i.e. Aglibol and Malakbel.[42] As with the triad of Baalshamin, it is likely that the two attendants of the 'Anonymous God' are borrowed from the 'Sacred Wood'; as far as one can tell from the small number of sources, Aglibol is more important than his companion. Unfortunately, we do not know whether Aglibol and Malakbel were considered to be a sun and a moon god in this combination. Their association with the 'Anonymous God' is explained by the fact that this deity presents an aspect of Baalshamin.[43] This follows from several epithets that are confined to Baalshamin and the 'Anonymous God', as well as from similarities in the iconography of both deities.[44]

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[39] On the cult of this god in general, see Gawlikowski, "Dieux de Palmyre", 2632-2634.

[40] *PAT* no. 0327 (188 CE). The notion of the triad of the 'Anonymous God' was introduced by H. Seyrig, "Hiérarchie des divinités", 193-194, and idem, "Nouveaux monuments palmyréniens", 281-282.

[41] *PAT* nos. 0347 (161 CE) and 0348 (n.d.). *PAT* no. 0406 (n.d.).

[42] *PAT* no. 0383 (240 CE). Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra*, 15, pl. XXXI. Contra Milik, *Dédicaces*, 198. The fact that neither of them is represented with a crescent moon does not provide sufficient proof against this identification.

[43] Already Cumont, *Fouilles*, 104, note 4. This interpretation is almost generally accepted. Cf. Gawlikowski, "Dieux de Palmyre", 2636. An exception to this rule is Teixidor, *Pagan God*, 122-133, who argues that the 'Anonymous God' presents an aspect of Iarḥibol of the Efqa. Teixidor bases his hypothesis upon the fact that a great many altars dedicated to the 'Anonymous God' were found in the vicinity of the source. However, the surroundings of the Efqa are by no means the only place where clusters of such objects have been found. Moreover, Dijkstra, *Life and Loyalty*, 154, points out that dedications found scattered throughout the city outnumber those found in clusters. As far as can be inferred from the evidence found thus far, the god never had a temple of his own. In a later study, Teixidor, *Pantheon*, 115-119, modifies his former hypothesis and suggests that the formula of the 'Anonymous God' was most probably cultic and as such could be applied to various deities, even though the inscriptions seem to refer to one particular god. Teixidor's final remark illustrates the extremely hypothetical character of his argument. None of the material available substantiates his hypothesis. Moreover, although the emancipation of cultic formulas or epithets into divine names is well attested in the Near East (cf. the divine name Bel, a former epithet of Marduk), I know of no cultic formulas that were simultaneously used to designate various deities.

[44] On the shared attributes in the iconography of both deities, see Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra*, 15. On the epithets used for both gods: Starcky and Gawlikowski, *Palmyre*, 97-99.

Both the cult and the character of the 'Anonymous God' are enigmatic. The extant information derives from hundreds of small altars, most of them dating from the third century CE, that have been found scattered over the city. The rise of this cult has been explained as a spiritualization of the cult of Baalshamin - its growing popularity has even been interpreted as a tendency towards monotheism.[45] Consequently, it was long presumed that the 'Anonymous God' gradually replaced Baalshamin after the middle of the second century CE, until excavations of the temple of Baalshamin proved this view to be incorrect. Notwithstanding the growing popularity of the 'Anonymous God', Baalshamin continued to be venerated in this 'tribal' sanctuary. The supposition of a tendency towards monotheism conflicts with the fact that many of the altars dedicated to the 'Anonymous God' were found in ancestral sanctuaries, including that of Baalshamin himself. Furthermore, the fact that the 'Anonymous God' is associated several times with Aglibol and Malakbel contradicts the presumed belief in one god.

The most conspicuous feature of the cult of the 'Anonymous God' is its personal and private character.[46] He is the only god in the whole Palmyrene pantheon whom individual believers ask for personal assistance.[47] Another significant feature of dedications to the 'Anonymous God' is that references to the 'tribe' or clan of the dedicator are usually absent. Equally remarkable is the relatively large number of women acting as dedicatory agents and co-agents, from which it follows that the household rather than the traditional clan had become the main frame of reference in this cult. Obviously, being primarily personal rather than ancestral, the cult of the 'Anonymous God' was not confined to one particular social group: hence its popularity in the third century CE is at least partly explained by the diminished importance of traditional social structures during this period in Palmyra.[48]

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[45] Eissfeldt, *Tempel und Kulte*, 91-92; J. Starcky, "Le dieu suprême à Palmyre", *Petra and the Caravan Cities* (ed. F. Zayadine; Amman 1990), 153-155.

[46] Gawlikowski, "Dieux de Palmyre", 2632-2633; Dijkstra, *Life and Loyalty*, 152-154.

[47] Instances are listed by Dijkstra, *Life and Loyalty*, 139-142.

[48] Milik, *Dédicaces*, 292-293, argues that the cult was instituted by the city council, and was therefore a civic cult. Although some dedications (notably *PAT* no. 0340, dated 114 CE) were made by the city, the majority of the monuments have an explicitly private character. Cf. Gawlikowski, "Dieux de Palmyre", 2633, who convincingly refutes Milik's hypothesis.

Malakbel's position in Palmyrene religion

Malakbel's association with various groups of deities is a significant feature of this god in the religion of Palmyra. In all the constellations discussed above, the god is less important than his divine associates. Originally Malakbel's cult was of a vegetative character and this remained an important aspect after he had acquired solar features. It is only in conjunction with Baalshamin that Malakbel becomes a sun god, a comparatively late innovation, resulting from the increasing Arab influence that made itself felt in the oasis from the beginning of the Common Era. Malakbel's new solar function is no evidence of his increasing importance though; even in his capacity as a sun god Malakbel is overshadowed by the moon god Aglibol. The hypothesis that the sun god Malakbel possessed his own temple in Palmyra is not supported by any evidence.[49]

Another conspicuous feature of Malakbel's cult in Palmyra is that it is not confined to one particular group or family, differing in this respect from the cult of most deities in the oasis. The god plays a role in the family cults of the Bene Komare, the Bene Bonna and the Bene Ma^{c}zin, and thus was worshipped by the greater part of Palmyra's population. Malakbel's affiliation with the 'Anonymous God', whose cult also had a strongly personal character and who was worshipped by the entire population, fits well with his wide popularity. Apart from this association, however, Malakbel's cult was first and foremost a family affair in Palmyra.

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[49] This is inferred from a passage in the *Historia Augusta*, Aurelian, 31, 7-9, according to which the Emperor Aurelian ordered the restoration of the temple of Helios after his troops conquered Palmyra in 272 CE:

> Templum sane Solis, quod apud Palmyram aquiliferi legionis tertiae cum vexilliferis et draconario et cornicinibus atque liticinibus diripuerunt, ad eam formam volo, quae fuit, reddi. Habes trecentas auri libras de Zenobiae capsulis, habes argenti mille octingenta pondo de Palmyrenorum bonis, habes gemmas regias. Ex his omnibus fac cohonestari templum; mihi et dis immortabilis gratissimum feceris.

> Now as to the Temple of the Sun at Palmyra, which has been pillaged by the eagle-bearers of the Third Legion, along with the standard-bearers, the dragon-bearers and the buglers and trumpeters, I wish it restored to the condition in which it formerly was. You have 300 pounds of gold from Zenobia's coffers, you have 1,800 pounds of silver from the property of the Palmyrenes, and you have the royal jewels. Use all these to embellish the temple; thus both to me and to the immortal gods you will do a most pleasing service.

Assuming that the Sol Invictus Aurelian installed in Rome was actually Malakbel (Zosimos, 1. 61. 2), the temple of Helios is identified as Malakbel's: E. Will, "Le sac de Palmyre", *Mélanges André Pignaniol* (EPHE, VIe section; Paris 1966), 1409-1411. There is no proof, however, that Aurelian's Sol Invictus was identical with Malakbel (cf. below, note 64). Hence there are no reasons to assume that the temple Aurelian restored was dedicated to him. In case the passage is historically correct, it possibly refers to a temple of the sun god Shamash. A Greek-Palmyrene inscription on an altar which probably dates from the middle of the first century CE equates Shamash with Helios (*CIS* II no. 3979. Seyrig, "Iconographie de Malakbêl", 203, rightly notes that this inscription is actually the same as *IP*, no. 60, which is overlooked by *PAT*, in which they are still listed as two inscriptions with different readings). A dedication to Helios from the last year of of Zenobia's reign, *FP* I, 208, no. 2, perhaps refers to a sanctuary of Shamash located in the area that later became Diocletian's camp: Gawlikowski, *Temple*, 100 and 103; Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra*, 20. However, compare the deviant reading of Milik, *Dédicaces*, 315-316, who follows L. Robert, according to whom the inscription refers to a marble statue of Helios, which was erected in the Caesareum.

In none of the four combinations in which Malakbel figures, not even in the cult of the 'Anonymous God', does his cult have a civic character. In this respect Malakbel's cult differs from those of Bel and Iarḥibol. The meaning of the two Gaddê reliefs from the Palmyrene sanctuary in Dura-Europos is primarily civic, an aspect missing from the cults of Malakbel in Palmyra, where Malakbel's subordinate position compared to other Palmyrene deities and the ancestral character of his cult stand in marked contrast to the prominent role he is supposed to have played in the temple of the Gaddê in Dura-Europos.

The cult of Malakbel among Palmyrene expatriates

Malakbel's insignificance in Palmyra was certainly not reflected in the position he held among Palmyrene expatriates, among whom, judging by the evidence from inscriptions, his cult was very popular. Inscriptions that mention Malakbel outnumber references to any other Palmyrene deity abroad. In view of this evidence it is understandable that until the excavations of Palmyra proved the assumption to be wrong, pointing indisputably to Bel as the city's main god, Malakbel was thought to be Palmyra's supreme deity.[50] Irrespective of the religious hierarchy at Palmyra, however, many scholars infer from the number of inscriptions related to Malakbel that have been found abroad, that his cult was more important than Bel's among Palmyrene expatriates. The presumed functioning of Malakbel as the tutelary deity of the temple of the Gaddê in Dura-Europos is cited as a case in point. Although Malakbel's prominent position in the temple of the Gaddê cannot be explained by means of the cult of the god in Palmyra, it apparently accords with the religious inclination of Palmyrene expatriates in other places. Explaining the popularity of this god abroad may therefore also clarify the position of the god in Dura-Europos.

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[50] I. Lidzbarski, *Ephemeris für semitische Epigraphik*, vol. 1 (1902), 255; R. Dussaud, *Notes de mythologie syrienne* (Paris 1903), 25.

In the past Malakbel's popularity abroad has frequently been explained by means of the presumed etymology of his name, 'messenger of Bel'.[51] It is argued that, as Bel's messenger, Malakbel developed into Bel's emanation or hypostasis, a development considered to be typical of Near Eastern religions in the Hellenistic and Roman eras.[52] This notion rests upon the assumption that Bel and other Syrian Baals had been spiritualized to the extent that they were no longer accessible to the faithful and could only be reached by means of an intermediary. In due course the identities of messenger and supreme god merged, and the messenger was looked upon as the hypostasis or emanation of the highest god: subsequently the cult of the messenger replaced that of the supreme god. Sun gods in particular are supposed to act as intermediaries, and Malakbel's solar character is cited in favour of the hypothesis that his cult gradually supplanted the cult of Bel among Palmyrene expatriates.

Neither the sources from Palmyra, nor the extra-Palmyrene materials, justify the hypothesis that Malakbel was the hypostasis of Bel, however, and it is dubious whether his presumed functioning as Bel's messenger should form a basis for inferring that his identity merged with Bel's.[53] The interpretation of Malakbel and other Near Eastern messenger-gods as substitute for a supreme god is largely inspired by the 'angel of Yahweh' (*mlʾk yhwh*), a supernatural figure that is taken to be the hypostasis or theophany of Yahweh. However, the identity of this figure is a hotly debated issue and it is questionable whether Yahweh and his angel are identical.[54] In ancient Near Eastern religions it is highly unusual for the identity of the divine messenger to merge with that of the sender.[55] As a rule, messengers indicate who is speaking and are thereby clearly distinguished from and subordinate to the sender of the message.[56] None of the Aramaic inscriptions from the Hellenistic and Roman period that are cited in support of the hypothesis that divine messengers are identified with their sender provide any firm proof to this respect.[57]

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[51] Above, note 6.

[52] The most influentual representative of this theory is F. Cumont. See for example his *Les religions orientales dans le paganisme romain* (4th edition, Paris 1929), 112. According to Cumont, the sun was the most important representative of the supreme god, who eventually was changed into a sun god himself. By means of archaeological materials from Syria, Henry Seyrig convincingly refuted the solar character of most Syrian Baals during the Hellenistic and Roman period: "Culte du Soleil", 337-373. However, Seyrig holds on to the notion that sun is the hypostasis of the supreme god, and calls Malakbel a hypostasis of Bel: "Bêl de Palmyre", *Syria* 48 (1971), 104. Cf. also Février, *Religion*, 79-80; *TMP*, 259-260; Milik, *Dédicaces*, 427-428; Teixidor, *Pagan God*, 14 and 62; Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra*, 17-18; Equini-Schneider, "Il santuario di Bel", 79-80; L. Bianchi, "I Palmyreni in Dacia: comunità e tradizioni religiose", *Dialoghi di Archeologia* 5.1 (1987), 93; E. Equini Schneider, "Palmireni in Africa: Calceus Herculis", *L'Africa romana* (Atti del V convegno di studio Sassari, 11-13 dicembre 1987; ed. A. Mastino; Sassari 1984), 395; R. Turcan, *Les cultes orientaux dans le monde romain* (2nd edition, Paris 1992), 171.

[53] This interpretation has a biblical bias and adopts an evolutionary perspective in which Semitic religions are considered a stage in the historical process which prepared the way for one Christian God. It is presumed that monotheism has always been latent among the Semites. Israelite religion provides the prime example of this tendency, but the same inclination is thought to be innate in other Semitic religions. This belief in one supreme being presumably reached its peak in the Hellenistic period and thereupon spread to the West. The cult of the 'Anonymous God' in Palmyra is frequently cited in favour of this hypothesis (cf. above, 190, for the refutation of the view that this cult represents a tendency towards monotheism). Jewish sources play a decisive role in this interpretation of Semitic religions such as the religion of Palmyra. Exemplary for this approach is Milik's discussion of messenger gods in Aramaic inscriptions from the Hellenistic and Roman period: *Dédicaces*, 426-440 (see especially his conclusions, 439-440). See also Teixidor's discussion of 'Semitic Monotheism', *Pagan God*, 13-17.

It is difficult to believe that Malakbel owed his popularity abroad to an Aramaic name that was devoid of cultic significance in Palmyra. Notwithstanding the presumed meaning of his name, he had no overt cultic relationship with Bel in Palmyra in the Common Era, but rather functioned as the attendant of two other supreme deities, Baalshamin and the 'Anonymous God'. In Palmyra, the god's solar character is inextricably bound up with his association with Baalshamin and hence cannot be cited in favour of his functioning as Bel's messenger.

The extra-Palmyrene sources do not provide sufficient proof that Malakbel's identity merged with Bel's outside Palmyra - nor is there any proof for the assumption that his cult replaced the cult of Palmyra's city god abroad. The hypothesis that Malakbel's identity merged with Bel's rests entirely upon a fragmentary bilingual inscription from Rome in which the Latin text supposedly refers to Bel, whereas the Greek text mentions Malakbel.[58] This reading, however, is dubious, and the inscription provides no firm proof that Bel and Malakbel were equated.[59] Their assimilation is contradicted by inscriptions which show that the two gods were worshipped side by side. These inscriptions clearly distinguish the two and thus there is no ground for the assumption that Malakbel replaced Bel. [60]

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[54] S. A. Meier, "Angel of Yahweh", *DDD*, cols. 96-108.

[55] Meier, "Angel of Yahweh", col. 105.

[56] D. Irvin, ***Mytharion. The Comparison of Tales from the Old Testament and the Ancient Near East*** (Neukirchen-Vluyn 1978), 103; S. A. Meier, "Angel I", *DDD*, cols. 81-90. The use of the notion of 'hypostasis' is typically Christian. The theological interpretation of this notion is inextricably linked with the Christian concept of the Trinity and does not apply to Jewish or other non-Christian religions.

[57] Contra Milik, *Dédicaces*, 426-440.

[58] *CIL* VI, no. 51 (n.d., = *IGUR* I, 100, no. 118). (The restorations are based upon *CIL* VI, no. 50, which commemorates a dedication of a *naos* to Bel by the same individual).

[Pro salute imp. Caesaris ....]
[C. Licinius N.... et Heliodorus Palmyrenus]
[ae]dem Belo stat[uerunt.....]
[Ἡ]λιόδω[ρος]
(ὁ Παλμυρην)ὸς καὶ Γ. Λικίνιος (N....)
[τὸν ναὸν] Μαλαχβήλῳ θε[ῷ ἀνέθηκαν]
(......) ΛΛΑΛΜΙΑ (.....)

Neither Malakbel's cult and character in Palmyra, nor the etymology of his name, provides a sufficient explanation for his popularity abroad. To find an alternative means of clarifying the god's prominence, I propose to take the extra-Palmyrene sources themselves as the point of departure. With one exception, these differ from the Palmyrene sources in their portrayal of Malakbel's position and character. Whereas the Palmyrene inscriptions associate Malakbel with other deities and present the god as less important than his associates, the extra-Palmyrene inscriptions mention him in isolation or, less frequently, as the most important among several Palmyrene gods.[61] Furthermore, in Palmyra Malakbel's solar character is a late and secondary aspect of his cult, whereas several extra-Palmyrene monuments explicitely identify him a sun god.[62]

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[59] According to Milik, *Dédicaces*, 42, we have to restore *Iar[ibolo]* instead of *stat[uerunt]* in line 3 of the Latin text. Seyrig, "Culte du Soleil", 350, note 4, notes that Milik's new reading excludes the equation of Bel with Malakbel. I do not understand his position. Perhaps Seyrig means that not Bel but Iarḥibol is equated with Malakbel. However, this identification is likewise without parallels (although it is not unlikely, given the solar character of both deities). The equation of Bel and Malakbel is dubious in view of *CIL* VI, no. 50, a dedication by the same individual, which mentions Bel in the Latin as well as in the Greek text

[60] In Rome a temple was dedicated to Bel, Iarḥibol and Aglibol (*CIL* VI, no. 50 (n.d.); *PAT* no. 0249 (n.d., = *IGUR* I, 103, no. 120 (n.d., but from the first half of the second century CE). The second dedicant - Soados, the son of Thaimos, the grandson of Lisamsaios - erected an honorary statue for his father in 127 CE in the temple of Bel in Palmyra: *PAT* no. 0266). Three votive offerings from Rome mention Malakbel as the divine recipient (*CIL* VI, no. 31036; *PAT* no. 0248 (n.d. cf. below 197); *PAT* no. 0247 (236 CE)). An individual serving in a Palmyrene *numerus* stationed in Tibiscum (Dacia), dedicated an altar to *Belo deo palmyreno* (*IDR* III. 1, no. 134), whereas two other military inscriptions from this locality mention Malakbel (*IDR* III.1, no. 142; S. Sanie, "Die syrischen und palmyrenischen Kulte im römischen Dakien", *ANRW* 18.2 (1989), 1235 and 1267, no. 114). Last but not least, Bel and Malakbel both received a cult in Dura-Europos.

[61] An altar from Rome is dedicated in Palmyrene to 'Malakbel and the gods of Palmyra' (*PAT* no. 0249). A Latin inscription from Sarmizegetusa (Dacia) dedicates a temple and a kitchen to *Diis patriis* Malakbel, Bebellahammon, Benefal and Manawat (*IDR* III. 2, no. 18). The remainder of the inscriptions mention Malakbel alone (cf. below, note 85, for an enumeration of the material).

[62] Three or four monuments are known which typify Malakbel as a sun god: an altar from Rome is dedicated in Latin to Sol Sanctissimus and in Palmyrene to Malakbel and the gods of Palmyra (*PAT* no. 0249, cf. the discussion of this altar below, 175-180). An altar from Sarmizegetusa (Dacia) is dedicated to *[D]eo Soli [Ma]lakbel(o)*: *CIL* III, no. 7956 (cf. Sanie, 'Syrischen und palmyrenischen Kulte', 1266, no 110): An altar dedicated to *Deo Soli Invicto Malachibelo* was found in Rome: *CIL* VI no. 31036 (*ILS* no. 4338). A votive plaque from Tibiscum (Dacia) possibly refers to *D[ei Solis] Malag[beli]*: Sanie, "Syrischen und palmyrenischen Kulte", 1229-1231, no. 104.

From the second century CE, solar deities became increasingly important in the Roman Empire, a development that eventually resulted in the installation in Rome of the cult of Sol Invictus by Aurelian in the third century CE. In the past, Wissowa, Cumont and others assumed that the Roman cult of Sol was the result of Eastern, notably Syrian, influences.[63] Presumably Malakbel played a prominent role in this process, for it is assumed that the Sol Invictus Aurelian installed in Rome was actually the Palmyrene sun god Malakbel.[64] In recent years this assumption has been severely criticized. There is abundant evidence to prove that there was an indigenous solar cult in Rome from the beginning of the first century CE onwards.[65] Furthermore, Henry Seyrig convincingly points out that the cult of the sun was of minor importance in Syria in the Hellenistic and Roman period.[66] In Palmyra, Malakbel's solarization was a late phenomenon, which was of secondary importance to his cult: consequently, it is extremely unlikely that Aurelian's Sol Invictus was, in fact, the god Malakbel. It will be argued in the following paragraphs that it was not the Palmyrene god Malakbel who had an impact upon Roman religion, but the religious fashions of Rome that influenced the character of the Palmyrene god, at least abroad.

The distinctive position and character of Malakbel among Palmyrene expatriates point towards a shift in his cult abroad, apparently as the result of external influences. Malakbel's transformation cannot adequately be explained from a theological point of view, but by studying the social context of the extra-Palmyrene material we may hope to discover whether his character and popularity abroad were connected with particular social conditions. Apart from the relief fragments from Dura-Europos, seventeen instances are known which testify to Malakbel's cult outside Palmyra and the Palmyrène. Two monuments can be ascribed to a non-military environment; the remaining fifteen can be attributed to Palmyrenes serving in the Roman army. In the remainder of this chapter I set out to interpret both groups in relation to their social-cultural environment.

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[63] Cumont, *Religions orientales*, 106. Recently: Teixidor, *Pantheon*, 49.

[64] This is concluded from Zosimos, 1.61.2:

> καὶ τὸ τοῦ Ἡλίου δειμάμενος ἱερὸν μεγαλοπρεπῶς τοῖς ἀπὸ Παλμύρας ἐκόσμησεν ἀναθήμασιν, Ἡλίου τε καὶ Βήλου καθιδρύσας ἀγάλματα.

> And the magnificent temple of the sun he (i.e. Aurelian) embellished with votive gifts from Palmyra, setting up statues of Helios and Bel.

In view of Malakbel's position in the religion of Palmyra, it not likely that Helios has to identified as Malakbel. It is most reasonable to suppose with Gawlikowski, *Temple*, 103, that the statue of Helios was actually that of the god Iarḥibol, since after Bel Iarḥibol is the most important deity in Palmyra.

[65] The inscriptional evidence is listed by G. H. Halsberghe, *The Cult of Sol Invictus* (EPRO 23; Leiden 1972), 26-37. On the situation in the Roman West see: S. E. Hijmans, "The Sun which did not Rise in the East: The Cult of Sol Invictus in the Light of Non-Literary Evidence", *BaBesch* 71 (1996), 115-150.

[66] Seyrig, "Culte du Soleil", 337-373. Only three Palmyrene deities exemplify solar features: Iarḥibol, Malakbel and Shamash. Of these three gods, the god Shamash has the most explicit solar character. He is the only Palmyrene god equated with Helios in Greek inscriptions (cf. above, note 49). It is noteworthy that we never encounter this Palmyrene sun god outside Palmyra and the Palmyrène. For a possible explanation, compare below, note 93.

The cult of Malakbel among civilians in Rome

The two non-military monuments were both found and produced in Rome. A relief that was dedicated in Greek and Palmyrene to Aglibol and Malakbel in 236 CE provides the only instance of an extra-Palmyrene monument that matches the religious situation in Palmyra (pl. XVII).[67] Despite the fact that the relief was produced in Rome, its iconography is wholly Palmyrene. It depicts Malakbel and Aglibol shaking hands in a way similar to that of the relief depicting the two gods in the 'Sacred Wood' from the temple of Bel in Palmyra (fig. 17). The Palmyrene character of the monument is confirmed by the identity of the dedicant. In the Greek text he is identified as Aurelius Heliodorus Antiochos, inhabitant of Hadriana Palmyra, whereas the Palmyrene text calls him Iarḥai, the son of Ḥalifai, the son of Iarḥai, the son Lashamash, the son of Sha^{c}du.

The Palmyrene character of this relief stands in marked contrast to the second monument, the famous altar that was found in the late fifteenth century in the Mattei garden in Trastevere, and which is presently on display in the Capitoline Museum in Rome.[68] Each of the four sides of this altar has a relief, two of which are accompanied by an inscription. The Latin inscription on the front of the altar dedicates the monument to Sol Sanctissimus, while the Palmyrene inscription below the relief on the left-hand side refers to Malakbel and the gods of Palmyra. The altar has been the subject of considerable scholarly interest ever since its discovery in the late fifteenth century. Over the last hundred years various interpretations of the sculptured reliefs have been proposed, all, in their different ways, emphasizing the wholly Palmyrene meaning of the monument. It is usually assumed that all four reliefs concern Malakbel and faithfully mirror the Palmyrene cult of this god. The interpretation of the monument proposed here, however, differs from the prevailing opinion.[69] From the Latin inscription and the style of the reliefs, it follows that the altar was produced in a Roman workshop in the late first or early second century CE.[70] It will be argued that this Roman origin had a strong impact upon the altar: the stress upon Malakbel's solar character, the iconography of the reliefs, and the self-identification of the principal dedicant, all testify to Roman influences.

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[67] *PAT* no. 0247.

[68] Excellent photographs of the reliefs can be found in Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra*, pls. XL-XLIV. The literature on the altar is extensive. For earlier literature see H. Stuart-Jones, *A Catalogue of the Ancient Sculptures Preserved in the Municipal Collections of Rome. The Sculptures of Museo Capitolino* (Oxford 1912), 48; W. Helbig, *Führer durch die öffentlichen Sammlungen klassischer Altertümer in Rome*, vol. 2: *Die städtischen Sammlungen* (4th edition, Tübingen 1966), 30-31, no. 1182. Standard publications are: F. Cumont, "L'autel palmyrénien du musée du Capitole", *Syria* 9 (1928), 101-109; W. Hermann, *Römische Götteraltare* (Kallmünz 1961), 113-116, no. 46.

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[69] The interpretation that set the trend for the publications that followed was first proposed by Dussaud, *Notes de mythologie syrienne*, 62. However, it was the elaboration of Dussaud's idea by Cumont, "Autel palmyrénien du musée du Capitole", 101-109, that became most influentual. According to Cumont, the four reliefs picture the daily course of the sun. His interpretation was by and large accepted by Février, *Religion des palmyréniens*, 71-75; *TMP*, 115-121; Turcan, *Cultes orientaux*, 173. A slightly different interpretation was proposed by Seyrig, "Bêl de Palmyre", 100-104. According to this author the four reliefs picture the annual course of the sun, i.e. the four seasons. Seyrig thereby introduced the vegetative aspect of Malakbel's cult in the interpretation of the monument, which he combined with the god's solar aspect. His interpretation was accepted by Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra*, 17-18; idem, "Dea Syria und andere syrische Gottheiten", 252-253; M. Gawlikowski, "Helios in peripheria orientali", *LIMC* V.1 (1990), no. 54. A third interpretative model was proposed by Teixidor, *Pantheon*, 47-48; Equini-Schneider, "Il santuario di Bel", 77-78, and Gawlikowski, "Dieux de Palmyre", 2635. These authors have abandoned the idea that the reliefs are to be read as a narrative cycle. Instead they are thought to illustrate three functions of Malakbel's personality: solar deity, god of vegetation and messenger of Bel.

[70] In view of intensified relations between Rome and Palmyra from the reign of Hadrian onwards, an early second century date is most plausible: M. G. Bertinelli Angeli, *Roma e l'Oriente* (Rome 1979), 70-102. This date is confirmed by the nomenclature of the dedicants and the reference to the *horrea Galba* in the Latin inscription: G. W. Houston, "The Altar from Rome with Inscriptions to Sol and Malakbel", *Syria* 62 (1991), 191-192, as well as by the style of the reliefs: Hermann, *Römische Götteraltare*, 115-116, and E. Simon, "Zur Bedeutung des Greifen in der Kunst der Kaiserzeit", *Latomus* 21 (1962), 765. The stylistic analysis of these authors was orally confirmed to me by S. Hijmans, who personally studied the monument. Arguing from the style of the head of Sol, the lack of drill holes, and the shape of the rosettes and volutes, Hijmans proposes a date around 100 CE. The early date of the monument is accepted by Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra*, 30 (with question mark); Equini-Schneider, "Il santuario di Bel", 76 and Will, *Palmyréniens*, 83-84. A date in the late first or early second century accords well with the oldest inscriptions that testify to the cult of Sol in Trastevere, *CIL* VI, no. 31034 (102 CE) and *CIL* VI, no. 52. The assumption of Milik, *Dedicaces*, 216, and R. MacMullen, *Paganism in the Roman Empire* (New Haven-London 1981), 162, note 20, that these inscriptions refer to a Palmyrene sanctuary dedicated to Malakbel is ungrounded. However, the inscriptions do prove that the worship of Sol was not confined to the third century, an assumption that underlies the second date proposed for the monument by E. Strong, *Roman Sculpture from Augustus to Constantine* (London 1907), 312; Eissfeldt, *Tempel und Kulte*, 88; Février, *Religion*, 68; Will, "Sac de Palmyre", 534; Halsberghe, *Sol Invictus*, 82; Teixidor, *Pantheon*, 47-50.

The front of the altar depicts the bust of a young beardless deity with a seven-rayed nimbus, hovering above an eagle with outstretched wings. The dedicatory inscription in the frame beneath the relief is in Latin (pl. XXI):[71]

Soli sanctissimo sacrum Ti(berius)
Claudius Felix et Claudia Helpis et
Ti(berius) Claudius Alypus fil(ius) eorum
votum solverunt libens merito
Calbienses de Coh(orte) III

> (This monument is) consecrated to the most holy sun. Tiberius Claudius Felix and Claudia Helpis, and their son, Tiberius Claudius Alypus,
> who live in the third courtyard of the apartment house of Galba, gratefully (offer this) in fulfilment of a vow (to the sun) who has earned it.

In the relief on the left-hand side, a young deity is pictured, wearing oriental dress, in a chariot drawn by four griffins. Behind the god stands a winged Victory holding a palm leaf in her right hand and placing a crown on the god's head with her left. Beneath the relief is an inscription in Palmyrene (pl. XXII):[72]

ʿltʾ dh lmlkbl wlʾlhy tdmr
qrb ṭbrys qlwdys plqs
wtdmryʾ lʾlhyhn šlm

> This altar (is) for Malakbel and the gods of Palmyra. Tiberius Claudius Felix and the Palmyrenes offered it to their gods. Peace.[73]

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[71] *CIL* VI, no. 710. The most recent discussion of the Latin inscription is by Houston, "Altar from Rome", 189-193. The translation of the last line follows his interpretation.

[72] *PAT* no. 0248 = *CIS* II, no. 3903 (with a long bibliography on the Palmyrene inscription). Together with *PAT* no. 0247, likewise from the Trastevere quarter of Rome, it was the first instance of the Palmyrene script to come to light. On the role of these inscriptions in the decipherment of the Palmyrene script, see Will, ***Palmyréniens***, 13-14.

[73] Teixidor, ***Pantheon***, 47, translates: 'This is the altar (which) Tiberius Claudius Felix and the Palmyrenes offered to Malakbel and the gods of Palmyra. To their gods. Peace !' *CIS* II, no. 3903, followed by Hoftijzer and Jongeling, "qrb", *DNWSI*, 1029, translates: 'Tiberius Claudius Felix has offered this altar to Malakbel and the gods of Palmyra. And the Palmyrenes (have offered it) to their gods. Peace.' Although both readings are possible from a grammatical point of view, they are less logical than the translation proposed above.

The relief at the back of the altar depicts a cypress with a ribbon around its topmost branches, a small child carrying a goat on his shoulders emerging from the right side of the tree. On the right-hand side of the altar the bust of a bearded god is depicted. His head is covered and he is holding a sickle of archaic form. Neither of these two figures is identified by an accompanying inscription.

Tiberius Claudius Felix acts as the major dedicant in both the Latin and the Palmyrene text. In all probability, therefore, Sol Sanctissimus and Malakbel designate the same god. This equation only partly tallies with the character of the god in Palmyra, where Malakbel's solar features are a secondary aspect of his character. This suggests that the emphasis upon Malakbel's solar character here results from the religious fashions of Rome.[74] The hypothesis that we are dealing with a Romanized version of Malakbel is confirmed by the iconography of the reliefs and the identity of the major dedicant.

That the altar was the product of a Roman workshop not only influenced the style of the four reliefs, but had its bearing upon their iconography as well.[75] Only the relief showing Malakbel in a wagon drawn by griffins has an exact counterpart in the iconography of Malakbel at Palmyra. The depiction of the bust of Sol Sanctissimus-Malakbel hovering above an eagle has no counterpart in the iconography of the oasis. Several Palmyrene reliefs picture Malakbel as a solar deity with a radiant nimbus, but never independently, and although solar deities are sometimes accompanied by eagles, this bird has no specific solar significance in

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[74] Teixidor, *Pantheon*, 48. On the indigenous origin of the Roman cult of Sol, compare above, note 65.

[75] I confine myself in this discussion to the figures depicted on the two reliefs with inscriptions. Most scholars assume that the two others are likewise related to Malakbel, but in my view this is extremely dubious. The interpretation of the figure of Saturn and the young god rising from the cypress as Malakbel is largely based upon the presumption that this is how they should be indentified. Although there are several similarities between these two reliefs and Palmyrene representations of Malakbel - in Palmyra Malakbel is associated with a cypress, and the god is sometimes represented carrying a sickle - ,the differences between the Roman and Palmyrene compositions are far more numerous. In fact, the bearded figure with the sickle is in perfect accord with the Roman iconography of Saturn: B. H. Krause, *Iuppiter Optimus Maximus Saturnus. Ein Beitrag zur ikonographischen Darstellung Saturns* (Mainz 1983). Parallels for the youth rising from a tree can be found in the iconography of Attis, Adonis and Mithras. This implies either that the iconography of these reliefs is strongly influenced by the iconography of Rome - which makes them hard to interpret, since this may have affected their meanings as well - or that the two reliefs do not represent Malakbel but other Palmyrene, or even Roman, deities. The latter possibility finds support in the fact that the Latin text dedicates the monument to one deity, Sol Sanctissimus, whereas the Palmyrene text dedicates the altar to 'Malakbel *and the gods of Palmyra*'. This suggests that not all four reliefs were thought to refer to Malakbel. Given the fact that Roman altars decorated with a cycle related to one specific deity are extremely rare and are confined to Mithras and Heracles (cf. Hermann, *Römische Götteraltare*, nos. 34, 42 and 77), I find it most plausible that the figure of Saturn and the figure of the boy rising from the cypress do not represent Malakbel.

Palmyra.[76] There are no depictions from Palmyra or Syria of the bust of a sun god above an eagle. [77]

The relief on the left-hand side of the altar, depicting Malakbel in a chariot drawn by four griffins, closely resembles the representation of Malakbel on the front of the altar that was found in the temple of Baalshamin in Palmyra (pl. XXIII). There can be no doubt that this scene is part of the traditional Palmyrene iconography of the god. It is questionable, however, whether the image was interpreted similarly in these two cultural milieus. The Roman altar equates Malakbel with Sol Sanctissimus, suggesting that the figure of the god in the chariot was endowed with a solar meaning. This accords well with the traditional meaning of griffins in Roman art.[78] Apollo is likewise depicted in a chariot drawn by griffins in his capacity as a solar god.[79] The god on the Roman altar is represented without a radiant nimbus though, and although this does not contradict the identification as Sol in the Roman West, it would be at odds with the traditional iconography of solar deities in Palmyra.[80] Given also that griffins do not have an explicitly solar meaning in Palmyrene iconography, it becomes unlikely that the scene originally had a solar significance. We may therefore conclude that the solar interpretation of this scene on the Roman altar is due to Western influence.

Contrary to what various authors have written, there is no unambiguous reference in the Latin text to the involvement of Palmyrenes. Nor is there anything in the nomenclature of Tiberius Claudius Felix and his wife and son that favours their Palmyrene origin: instead, they are identified in terms of the 'Calbienses of the third cohort'.[81] In a recent article George Houston satisfactorily explained this enigmatic expression as referring to the third courtyard of the apartment complex of the *horrea Galba*.[82] Hence the dedicant and his family are characterized as merchants living in Rome. Whereas the Latin text lists three dedicants of Roman nomenclature, the Palmyrene text designates Tiberius Claudius Felix and an unspecified group of Palmyrenes as the dedicants. Although this shows that Tiberius Claudius was somehow connected with a Palmyrene community in Rome, it does not necessarily imply that he was a Palmyrene himself: it is equally possible that he was the Roman patron of a group of Palmyrene merchants.

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[76] Several instances from Palmyra depict a solar or lunar deity flanked by eagles. However, none is identified as Malakbel. The identification of several of these sun gods as Malakbel is in fact based on the Roman altar. On this see the material assembled in *SB* I-II, 155-175 and 222-223.

[77] The closest parallel to the motif on the Roman altar is provided by a very crude relief dating from the Roman period which probably originates from Galilee. It pictures the bust of a radiant deity above two eagles; in all probability a representation of the sun in a chariot drawn by eagles: H. Seyrig, "Un bas-relief Galiléen", *MUSJ* 47 (1971), 202-205.

[78] On the meaning of the griffin in Greek and Roman art, see Prinz and Ziegler, "Gryps", 1922-1926; Simon, "Bedeutung des Greifen", 763-765; C. Delpace, *Le Griffon: de l'archaisme à l'époque imperiale. Etude iconographique et essai d'interpretation symbolique* (Rome 1980), 297-301.

[79] W. Lambrinudakis e.a., "Apollo", *LIMC* II.1 (1984), 229-230. Apollo in a wagon drawn by griffins: no. 472. Griffins are likewise associated with Dionysos: Delpace, *Griffon*, 295-297. Several instances depict this god in a chariot drawn by griffins: C. Gasparri and A. Veneri, "Dionyos", *LIMC* III.1 (1986), nos. 461-462. In view of the dedication of the altar to Sol, this identification is improbable.

[80] Hijmans, "The Sun which did not Rise in the East", 130-132.

The ambiguity with respect to the origin of the principal dedicant of the altar is unparalleled in bilingual inscriptions with an explicitly Palmyrene character. In Greek or Latin texts in which Palmyrenes bear Greek or Latin names, it is normally specified that they originate from Palmyra, whereas typical Palmyrene personal names in the Palmyrene texts still testify to the Palmyrene origin of these individuals. The dedicatory inscription on the Roman relief picturing Aglibol and Malakbel is an illustrative example.[83] The fact that the major dedicant of the altar presents himself first and foremost as a Roman citizen favours the hypothesis that the stress upon Malakbel's solar character was the result of religious fashions current in Rome.[84]

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[81] Already noted by D. Schlumberger, "Les gentilices romains des palmyréniens", *BEO* 9 (1942-43), 80, note 2. Cf. the discussion of the names by Equini-Schneider, "Il santuario di Bel", 76, note 35, with references to earlier literature.

[82] Houston, "Altar from Rome", 189-193. Houston's conclusions are accepted by Will, *Palmyréniens*, 83.

[83] Above, note 64. On the Latinization of Syrian names, which appears to have been especially frequent with freedmen, compare H. Solin, "Juden und Syrer im westlichen Teil der römischen Welt. Eine ethnisch-demographische Studie mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der sprachlichen Zustände", *ANRW* II.29.2 (1983), 781-783.

[84] The Roman interpretation of the Palmyrene god is perhaps supported by the fact that the Palmyrene name of the god is omitted in the Latin text. Greek and Latin inscriptions originating outside Palmyra invariably use Malakbel's indigenous name. Apart from the inscription on the Roman altar, Malakbel is only mentioned in two bilingual inscriptions: *PAT* nos. 0247 (from Rome, 236 CE) and 0273 (from Palmyra, 140 CE). Both are in Palmyrene and Greek and both transcribe the indigenous name of the god in the Greek text. The two or three Latin inscriptions in which Malakbel is equated with Sol likewise transcribe the indigenous name. On an altar from Sarmizegetusa (Dacia), *CIL* III, no. 7956: *[D]eo Soli [Ma]lakbel(o)*, and on an altar from Rome: *CIL* VI, no. 31036: *Deo Soli Invicto Malachibelo*. A votive plaque from Tibiscum (Dacia), Sanie, "Syrischen and palmyrenischen Kulte", 1235 and 1267, no. 114: *D[ei Solis] Malag[beli]*, perhaps provides the third instance.

The cult of Malakbel among Palmyrene soldiers serving in the Roman army

Of the seventeen examples which testify to the cult of Malakbel outside Palmyra, fifteen can be related to Palmyrene troops serving in the Roman army.[85] This suggests that Malakbel's eminent position and the shift in his personality that took place abroad are intimately bound up with the religious preferences of the Palmyrene troops. In order to protect their caravans against the pillaging Bedouin who roamed the dessert, Palmyra possessed its own mounted police force, famous for its skills with bow and arrow. From the second century onwards, Rome took advantage of the military skills of its subjects in the distant provinces and organized them in specialized units named after their place of origin.[86] From this time on Palmyrenes belonging to the so-called *numerus Palmyrenorum* served in the Roman army. They were stationed all over the Roman Empire, especially at its borders. Palmyrene soldiers could be found in Africa, Asia Minor and Rome itself. Closer to home, in Dura-Europos, Palmyrenes were engaged in the defence of that city after it was incorporated into the Roman Empire in 165 CE.[87]

As soldiers of the Roman army, Palmyrenes took part in the veneration of traditionally Roman gods as well as of those gods who enjoyed special popularity among soldiers, such as Mithras.[88] The cult of Roman gods and military deities was not exclusive, and their adaptation to religious practices that were current in the Roman army did not exclude Palmyrene soldiers' adherence to national religious traditions.[89] All over the Roman Empire they had a preference for Malakbel and Iarḫibol, two entirely Palmyrene deities.[90]

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[85] Malakbel is attested in seven or eight Latin inscriptions from North Africa. Four times in El Kantara: *CIL* VIII, no. 2497; *CIL* VIII, no. 8795; Albertini, "Inscriptions d'El Kantara", *Revue Africaine* 72 (1931), no. 8 (170-178 CE) and no. 9. Two, possibly three times in Castellum Dimmidi (modern Messad): *CIL* VIII, no. 8795; G. C. Picard, *Castellum Dimidi* (Paris 1944), 186-187, no. 9; possibly, idem, *op. cit.*, 187, no. 10. Once in El Ghara: *CIL* VIII, no. 18024. Six Roman inscriptions dedicated to Malakbel are known from Dacia. Four from Sarmizegetusa: *CIL* III, nos. 7954-7957 (temple dedicated to Malakbel and several other gods), and two from Tibiscum: *IDR* III.1, 142; Sanie, "Syrischen und palmyrenischen Kulte", 1235 and 1267, no. 14. One inscription from Rome was dedicated by a soldier to Malakbel: *CIL* VI, no. 31036.

[86] M. P. Speidel, "The Rise of Ethnic Units in the Roman Imperial Army", *ANRW* II.3 (1975), 202-231, for an extensive historical analysis of this practice and references to earlier literature.

[87] A comprehensive study dealing with Palmyrene troops serving in the Roman army has not been published to date. For a general discussion, see Starcky and Gawlikowski, *Palmyre*, 45-49; Will, *Palmyréniens*, 47-51; Millar, *Roman Near East*, 333-334. Several studies concentrate upon Palmyrenes stationed in particular areas. On Dacia see: Solin, "Juden und Syrer im westlichen Teil der römischen Welt", 766-769; Bianchi, "I Palmyreni in Dacia", 87-95; Sanie, "Syrischen und palmyrenischen Kulte", 1165-1271. On North Africa see: Solin, "Juden und Syrer im westlichen Teil der römischen Welt", 775-778; Equini Schneider, "Palmireni in Africa", 383-395. On the Palmyrene community in Rome, which counted military among its members, see Equini-Schneider, "Il santuario di Bel", 69-85.

[88] On Mithras' cult in Dacia and the possible participation of Palmyrenes, see below, note 99. A centurion of a Palmyrene *numerus* stationed in El Kantara made a dedication to Mercury: *CIL* VIII, no. 18007. Palmyrenes likewise participated in the cult of the Roman emperor: *Syria* 1925, 125; Albertini, "Inscriptions d'El Kantara", no. 8; *CIL* VIII, no. 8795.

It may be inferred from the inscriptions at our disposal that Malakbel and Iarḫibol were equally popular. Like Malakbel, Iarḫibol is a sun god who frequently figures alone.[91] Bel seldom occurs in testimonies of Palmyrene soldiers; only two inscriptions from a military context mention this god.[92] Clearly, in a military environment the cult of Malakbel and Iarḫibol was far more popular than Bel's.

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[89] A. S. Hoey, "Official Policy towards Oriental Cults in the Roman Army", *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 70 (1939), 456-458; Nock, "Roman Army", 199.

[90] Fourteen inscriptions testify to the cult of Malakbel among Palmyrene soldiers (above, note 85). With the exception of Dura-Europos and the Palmyrène, where Iarḫibol was very popular among Palmyrene soldiers (cf. below, 210-212), eight inscriptions from a military context mention Iarḫibol. With one exception, all are in Latin: Three instances testify to Iarḫibol's cult in Dacia. One from Tibiscum: *IDR* III.1, no. 137, and two from Apulum: *CIL* III, no. 1108, and Sanie, "Syrischen und palmyrenischen Kulte", 1265, no. 106. In total five inscriptions testify to the cult of Iarḫibol among Palmyrene troops stationed in North Africa. One from Ain Zaoui: *CIL* VIII, no. 17621. One from Lambesi: J. Carcopino, "Diverses inscriptions d'Algérie", *BCTH* 1920, fév., 88. One from Tripolitana: O. Brogan and J. Reynolds, "Seven New Inscriptions from Tripolitana", *Papers of the British School at Rome* 28 (1960), 51, no. 1. One from Coptos in Egypt: *IGR* I, no. 116, and one on an altar, or (more probably) a base for a statue, of Iarḫibol, which was recently found in Berenike in Egypt. The latter text will be published in the near future by A. Verhoogt and M. Dijkstra, *Berenike 1998. Report of the Excavations at Berenike (Red Sea Coast and the Survey of the Eastern Desert* (ed. S. E. Sidebotham and W. Z. Wendrich; Leiden 1999). I am grateful to both editors for allowing me to quote this inscription, which is in Palmyrene and Greek:

> *.... dy yrḥb[l] ᶜbd bryky glypᵓ*
>
> [statue/ altar] of Iarḫibol, made by Bariki, the sculptor
>
> Εὐτυχοις παλμύροις. Ἐπὶ Αἰμιλίου Κέλερος ἐπάρχου Ὄρους Βερενείκης καὶ Εἴλης
> Ἡρακλιανῆς καὶ Οὐαλερίου Γερμανίωνος χι(λιάρχου) εἴλης τῆς αὐτῆς Βεριχει
> τεχνείτης ἐποίησεν θεὸν μέγιστον Ἱεροβώλ
>
> To Palmyrene Good Fortune. On behalf of Aemilius Celer, prefect of Berenike and of the Ala Heracliana and (on behalf of) Valerius Germanionos, chiliarch of the same Ala. Berichei the artisan has made the greatest god Iarḫibol.

From the same locality comes a Greek dedication to Julia Domna by Palmyrene military. Therefore the inscription most probably dates between 180 and 212 CE.

[91] All instances listed above, note 90, mention Iarḫibol in isolation. Three label Iarḫibol a sun god: Brogan and Reynolds, "Seven New Inscriptions from Tripolitana", 51, no. 1: *Soli Hierobolo*; *IDR* III.1, no. 137 from Tibiscum: *Deo Soli Ierhaboli*; *CIL* III, no. 1108 (211 CE), from Apulum: *Deo Soli Hierobolo*.

[92] *IDR* III.1, no. 134 (Tibiscum, Dacia); Sanie, "Syrischen und palmyrenischen Kulte", 1264, no. 103 (Porolissum, Dacia). Two other inscriptions are dedicated to *Diis patriis*: *IDR* III.1, nos. 135 and 136 (both from Tibiscum, Dacia).

The popularity of Iarḥibol and Malakbel among Palmyrene soldiers stands in marked contrast to the prevalence of Bel and his associates among Palmyrene merchants. The diminished interest among soldiers in the cult of their city god does not testify to a devaluation of Bel in the religion of Palmyra itself, but is a shift of emphasis resulting from the particular conditions of their environment. It follows from the military inscriptions that Iarḥibol and Malakbel were both worshipped as sun gods, and this suggests that their solar character accounts for their popularity among the Palmyrene military. Compared to the cult of Iarḥibol and Malakbel in Palmyra, their functioning as autonomous solar deities presents an innovation. In Palmyra, the two gods only function as solar deities when associated with a supreme god, viz. Bel and Baalshamin respectively.[93] We may therefore conclude that the emphasis upon the solar character of Iarḥibol and Malakbel should be understood in the context of the Roman army. The growing importance of the cult of solar deities in the Roman Empire - and in particular within the imperial army - from the second century onwards, is well known.[94] In the light of this, the shift in their personality and the popularity of the two gods among Palmyrene soldiers accords well with a general tendency in the religion of the Roman army. It is the result of the assimilation of religious ideas that were current in this particular environment.

The religion of the Palmyrene military in Dura-Europos

In 164 or 165 CE, during the Parthian expedition of Lucius Verus, Dura-Europos was captured by the Romans. It remained in Roman hands until the fall of the city about 256 CE. Little is known about the first forty years of Roman occupation. The number of Roman soldiers stationed in Dura appears to have been small and life in the city seems to have remained much the same as before. During this period a body of Palmyrene archers was stationed at Dura. Although they belonged to the Roman garrison, they were probably not an official unit of the Roman army. Only after 208 CE were large numbers of soldiers stationed in the city. During the last fifty years of the city's existence an official Roman regiment, the Cohors XX Palmyrenorum, was permanently stationed in Dura-Europos.

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[93] Iarḥibol owed his prominent position in Bel's cult to the importance of his cult at the Efqa. Unfortunately we do not know whether the god of the Efqa was a sun god. No representations of Iarḥibol of the Efqa were found in Palmyra. The only instance is provided by the relief from Dura-Europos on which Iarḥibol is not only represented with the conventional solar rays, but likewise has a crescent resting on his shoulders (cf. the description of this relief in the appendix, 256-257). On the basis of this relief we may at least question the original solar character of Iarḥibol of the source. Be that as it may, it is clear that the god owed his prominent position in the religion of Palmyra to the communal character of his cult at the Efqa, not to his solar character. However, it is reasonable to suppose that the communal character of Iarḥibol's cult at Palmyra accounts for his functioning as an autonomous sun god abroad. Although Malakbel's cult in Palmyra was primarily ancestral, the god was worshipped by various sections of the population (cf. above, 190-191), which perhaps explains why Malakbel and not Shamash, the third Palmyrene sun god whose cult was especially popular with Arab groups, became a prominent sun god with the military.

[94] Halsberghe, *Sol Invictus*, 116-117.

The religious preferences of Palmyrene soldiers stationed in Dura by and large correspond to those of Palmyrene troops stationed elsewhere. Compared to other military colonies, however, the situation in Dura is more complex. On the one hand this is due to the fact that Dura-Europos has provided the largest body of military records of any kind with respect to a Roman regiment.[95] On the other hand it results from the long history of the Palmyrene community in the city before 165 CE, and the interaction between the long-established merchant community and the newly arrived soldiers. In all likelihood the established Palmyrene community of Dura did not leave when the soldiers arrived. Evidence from the temple of the Gaddê and the temple of Bel in the necropolis suggests that Palmyrene soldiers joined the cults practised by other residents of Palmyrene origin at Dura. Unfortunately, however, it is frequently difficult to distinguish between the two groups.

As elsewhere, the Palmyrene soldiers adopted facets of the religion of the army and simultaneously held on to their own religious traditions. Material from Dura amply demonstrates that these two aspects of religious practice coexisted peacefully. The so-called 'Feriale Duranum', the religious calendar of the Cohors XX Palmyrenorum, provides one of the best examples of adoption by foreign troops of the official religious practice of the Roman army.[96] From this document, which certainly dates from the reign of Severus Alexander, probably between 223-227 CE, the entire military religious year can be reconstructed. Although it is a festival calendar of a foreign unit, no gods from the locality of Dura or Palmyra appear. It only mentions army festivals, Roman gods of public festivals, and the cults of the reigning emperor, the *Divi*, and imperial women. These religious observations are substantially those of Rome itself. Consequently, most scholars assume that a copy of this document was sent to every unit of the Roman army, connecting troops stationed all over the empire to Rome by the simultaneous celebration of Roman festivals.[97] As such it contributed to the Romanization and unification of the army.[98]

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[95] This is due to the substantial quantity of parchments and papyri that were found at Dura.

[96] *TEAD PP*, no. 54; R. O. Fink, *Roman Military Records on Papyrus* (PMAPA 26; Cleveland 1971), 422-429. The name of the Cohors XX Palmyrenorum has not been preserved in the text. However, the document was found with other papyri belonging to the record of this cohort in W 13, a room adjacent to the temple of Artemis-Azzanathkona. From this it may be inferred that the present text is likewise from their *officium*.

In 168 CE Palmyrene archers in the service of Rome founded a Mithraeum in the northern part of the city. In all likelihood they first encountered the cult when they were stationed elsewhere at the Roman frontier, probably in Dacia and Moesia.[99] Both the ground plan of the shrine and the iconography of the cult reliefs are typical of Mithraea throughout the Roman world. At the beginning of the third century CE the Palmyrene troops were joined by other Roman troops, and these soldiers participated in the cult with the Palmyrene followers of Mithras.[100] Clearly, therefore, this cult has a supra-ethnic, pan-imperial basis. In Dura, as elsewhere in the Roman Empire, the devotees of Mithras were a brotherhood of men who for the majority shared the same profession. Hence this cult testifies to the adoption by Palmyrenes of the religion of the Roman army.

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[97] R. W. Davies, "The Daily Life of the Roman Soldier under the Principate", *ANRW* II.1 (1974), 315.

[98] R. O. Fink, A. S. Hoey, and W. F. Snyder, "The Feriale Duranum", *YCS* 7 (1940), 202-211. Nock argued that part of its purpose was to give the troops holidays from work: "Roman Army", 191-229. These options are, of course, not exclusive. To these two functions we may add a third: J. Helgeland, "Roman Army Religion", *ANRW* 16. 2 (1978), 1487-1488, who points to the structurizing function of the calendar in the soldier's daily life.

[99] A. D. Nock, "The Genius of Mithraism", *JRS* (1937), 109. Cf. the discussion in the appendix, below, 292-306. The hypothesis that Palmyrene archers encountered the cult in Dacia or Moesia is based upon their presence in these regions at an early date. There is no definite proof that soldiers from these regions were later stationed in Dura-Europos. Palmyrene archers are first attested in Porolissum in Dacia in 120 CE: *CIL*, no. 837. Cf. *Inv.* X, no. 79 (cf. Seyrig, "Inscriptions grecques", 231-233, no. 4). In Dacia Mithraic monuments were found in three localities where Palmyrene troops were stationed; in Apulum (*CIMRM* II, nos. 1935-2005), Sarmizegetusa (*CIMRM* II, nos. 2022-2152), and Tibiscum (*CIMRM* II, no. 2153). Although there is no explicit evidence from which it may be inferred that Palmyrenes participated in the cult, this is very probable. An altar from nearby Dorstadt records that Palmyrenes appointed a man from Macedonia as priest (*CIMRM* II, no. 2008 = *CIL* III, no. 7728). The identity of the god he served is debated. According to Cumont, *Religions orientales*, 276, note 39, we are dealing with a Palmyrene god, whereas Nock, "The Genius of Mithraism", 110, opts for Mithras. Nock rightly notes that it is more probable that Palmyrenes would appoint a man from Macedonia as priest of Mithras (whose cult had an extra-national basis) than as priest of their native cult.

[100] *TEAD* VII-VIII, 85-86, no. 847 (n.d., between 209 and 211 CE), recording the restoration of Mithras' shrine by Antonius Valentinus, the centurion of detachments of two legions, *vexillationes* of the IV Scythian and of the XVI Flavia Firma. *TEAD* VII-VIII, 87-89, no. 848, pl. XLIX, 2) and a Greek dedication to the victory of the emperor, in all likelihood Caracalla (sole ruler 212-217 CE). In all probability soldiers of the Cohors XX Palmyrenorum still participated in the cult of Mithras. Unfortunately, however, the hundreds of graffiti and dipinti from the middle Mithraeum mentioning visitors to the shrine have never been published in full.

Like their countrymen stationed elsewhere in the Roman Empire, Palmyrene soldiers at Dura-Europos had a strong preference for Iarḥibol. Six instances which testify to his cult can be ascribed to Palmyrene soldiers, which makes Iarḥibol the most popular Palmyrene god of the Palmyrene troops in Dura. As elsewhere in the army, Iarḥibol frequently figures alone. Several instances, however, present him as the most important god of a group of Palmyrene deities. These configurations are unique and can at least partly be explained within a military context.

The oldest instance testifying to Iarḥibol's popularity with the military was found in the temple of the Gaddê. A relief which in all likelihood dates between the years 165 and 175 CE is dedicated to 'Iarḥibol, the sacred stone of the source' by a group of archers belonging to the Bene Mita (pl. VI).[101] In the same temple was found an altar dedicated to Iarḥibol: the fact that the inscription is in Greek strongly suggests that it was made by soldiers. A monumental base also found in this part of the temple bears a Latin dedication by the Cohors XX Palmyrenorum; in all likelihood members of this cohort were responsible for Iarḥibol's altar as well. A dipinto representing the sun god Iarḥibol was found in one of the rooms belonging to their military clerical office, located north of the temple of Artemis-Azzanathkona (pl. XIV).[102]

Iarḥibol was especially popular among soldiers who visited the so-called 'temple of the Palmyrene gods' in the third century CE. A gypsum altar found just beside the entrance of the 'tower of the Palmyrene archers' bears a Greek dedication to Iarḥibol by the tribune Screibonios Moucianos. Screibonius does not specify the regiment under his command, but it is likely that it was the Cohors XX Palmyrenorum. In this temple a Greek graffito scratched in the north wall of the *naos* lists jewellery belonging to Iarḥibol and Aglibol, suggesting that statues of the two gods were set up there - jewels intended for the embellishment of cult statues are well known in the ancient world.[103] Their presence may be confirmed by a fresco on the north wall of the *pronaos* which depicts Julius Terentius, the tribune of the Cohors XX Palmyrenorum, and several of his men paying homage to the Palmyrene deities Iarḥibol, Aglibol and Arṣu (pl. XIII).[104] The three gods are represented as smaller than the rest of the figures and are shown standing on a pedestal, suggesting that the fresco depicts their cult statues. Interestingly, the gods are wearing jewellery. The Palmyrene graffito scratched in the wall in the proximity of the painting mentions the same three gods. Their statues may very well have been placed in the *naos*, possibly in the small aedicula that was constructed in the third century CE.

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[101] Appendix, 256-257.

[102] Appendix, 323-326.

[103] Appendix, inscriptions nos. 56 and 58.

[104] On the identification of these deities, see the appendix, 313.

Whereas at Dura the Palmyrene troops had a special devotion to Iarḥibol, we know of no testimonies of soldiers that are addressed to Bel. In this respect too their religious preferences tally with those of Palmyrene soldiers stationed elsewhere in the Roman empire. In Dura the prominent position of Iarḥibol in the cult of the Palmyrene troops is exemplified most clearly in the fresco which depicts Julius Terentius and the soldiers of the Cohors XX Palmyrenorum. Bel is not among the deities worshipped by the Palmyrene cohort: instead, Iarḥibol occupies the most prominent position in the centre, flanked by Aglibol and Arṣu, two deities who elsewhere frequently accompany Bel. It does not follow from Bel's absence, though, that he was replaced by Iarḥibol in Dura-Europos in the third century CE. The so-called 'Otes-fresco' from room K of the same temple does picture Bel with his customary associates (pl. XII). However, in contrast to the fresco representing Julius Terentius and his men, this painting did not originate in a typical military context.[105] We may therefore conclude that Iarḥibol's precedence over Bel is characteristic of the religion of Palmyrene soldiers.

The monuments from Dura clearly show that the official religion of the Roman army and the cult of indigenous deities coexisted peacefully. The 'Feriale Duranum' was found in the room adjacent to the room containing a dipinto showing a Roman officer making an offering to Iarḥibol. The cult of Palmyrene deities even assimilated typical Roman practices: on the fresco which represents Julius Terentius and his men before Iarḥibol, Aglibol and Arṣu, a standard-bearer holding the *vexillum* of the cohort is standing beside the altar. Military standards were important identity markers for Roman legions and cohorts, and the object of a cult in their own right.[106] Cumont thought that the standard was an object of worship of Julius Terentius and his men, but this hypothesis pushes the evidence a bit too far.[107] However, it may be safely inferred from the presence of the *vexillum* that Julius Terentius is presented here in his official capacity, invested with all the majesty of Rome.[108] Hence the worship of Palmyrene deities by the Cohors XX Palmyrenorum may be regarded as having been performed semi-officially, with all the solemnity and Roman symbolism which would have accompanied any cult prescribed by the Feriale.[109]

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[105] Appendix, inscription no. 48 and 310-314.

[106] Helgeland, "Roman Army Religion", 1471-1480. It is recorded in the 'Feriale Duranum' that the *vexillum* received a cult during the celebration of the *Rosaliae Signorum*: Fink, Hoey and Snyder, "Feriale Duranum", 115-120.

[107] Cumont, *Fouilles*, 111-113.

[108] Nock,"Roman Army", 199.

Conclusion

The eminent position of Malakbel displayed by extra-Palmyrene sources is largely due to his popularity among Palmyrenes serving in the Roman army. The religious preferences of the Palmyrene troops stationed in Dura-Europos tally with the religion of Palmyrene soldiers stationed elsewhere. Thus Malakbel's presumed role as the tutelary deity of the temple of the Gaddê would be understandable in a military context. However, the two Gaddê reliefs were dedicated in 159 CE, several years before the city fell into Roman hands, and there is no proof whatsoever that Palmyrene soldiers were stationed in the city at this early date. Moreover, the dedicant of these reliefs has no relationship with the military, but can be identified as a member of an important Palmyrene family that probably made its fortune in trade.

If the relief representing Malakbel was contemporary with the two Gaddê reliefs and functioned as the principal cult relief of the temple, it is to be expected that this god would be related to the deities depicted by the flanking reliefs. The two Gaddê have an overt civic meaning, which suggests that a Palmyrene deity of civic importance functioned as the tutelary deity of this sanctuary. However, Palmyrene sources provide no clue as to the civic importance of Malakbel's cult. Analogous to his role on the altars from the temple of Baalshamin in Palmyra and from Rome, it would be more reasonable to suppose that Malakbel was the personal god of the dedicant. However, the hypothesis that a family god functioned as the tutelary deity of the temple of Gaddê is at odds with the civic meaning of the Gaddê reliefs and is difficult to reconcile with the communal function of the temple. Thus, if the relief representing Malakbel was indeed contemporary with the other two, it is more probable that one of the Gaddê was the tutelary deity of this Palmyrene sanctuary in Dura-Europos. This, however, is unlikely in view of the subordinate position of both tutelary deities on the fresco representing Julius Terentius and his men.

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[109] M. Rostovtzeff, "Res Gestae Divi Saporis and Dura", *Berytus* 3 (1943), 57. Equally significant for the position of un-official religions in the army, though not typically Palmyrene, is the fact that in *TEAD PP*, no. 89. i, 13 (239 CE), we find Iuppiter Dolichenus s(anctus ?) as a watchword for one day. This was a matter of formal action, even though Dolichenus was never accepted among the Roman gods.

Given the fact that it is not likely that Malakbel or one of the Gaddê functioned as the tutelary deity of the sanctuary, I propose to date the relief which pictures Malakbel after 165 CE, in the Roman period. It probably has to be understood in a military context. This fits the clientele of the temple of the Gaddê after 165 CE, and is in accordance with the prominence of Malakbel's cult among Palmyrene soldiers stationed elsewhere in the Roman empire. Consequently we have to conclude that we do not know which god was originally the tutelary deity of the temple. In view of the overt civic meaning of the two Gaddê, it is most reasonable to assume that it was Bel, but this is, of course, mere speculation

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

It would be unsatisfactory to close this study without returning to the main questions posed in the introduction: did Palmyra influence religion in Dura-Europos and did the religion of Palmyrenes in Dura-Europos differ from the religion of Palmyra itself? If so, was this due to the influence of their new surroundings or not? The answers to these questions are based both on the archaeological remains of Palmyrene culture that are discussed in the appendix to this study and on the findings from the preceding chapters. Though these final observations apply primarily to the Palmyrene community in Dura-Europos, they may be used to exemplify the interaction between various cities and cultures in Roman Syria.

In contrast to the prevailing opinion, we may conclude that Palmyrene religion did not have a profound influence on religion in Dura-Europos. It is true that Palmyrene deities figure prominently in the archaeological records from the city, but in the majority of these instances their cult is confined to people of Palmyrene origin. During the Parthian period, Palmyrene deities were chiefly worshipped in the temple of Bel in the necropolis and in the temple of the Gaddê. Both sanctuaries had been founded by Palmyrenes and were administered by Palmyrene priests. As far as one can tell from the personal names in inscriptions and graffiti from these temples, they were exclusively visited by Palmyrenes. Whereas Greek is the common language of religious dedications in Dura-Europos, most texts from these sanctuaries are in the Palmyrene Aramaic language. This confirms the distinctively local character of these sanctuaries.

Zeus Kyrios-Baalshamin is the only god of Palmyrene origin whom Palmyrenes and local inhabitants of Dura-Europos worshipped together. Significantly, the inscription on the relief dedicated to this god is the only bilingual inscription in Greek and Palmyrene from Parthian Dura-Europos. However, his cult was confined to a small group of worshippers and there is no evidence to suggest that it influenced other cults in the city. Apart from a fragmentary relief from the temple of Zeus Megistos, which was tentatively identified as a representation of the god Arṣu, we have no evidence that Palmyrene deities were worshipped in temples devoted to gods of a different origin.

During the Roman period, the temple in the necropolis and the temple of the Gaddê retained their exclusively Palmyrene character. Soldiers of Palmyrene origin who served in the Roman army joined the pre-existing clientele. In addition, Palmyrene gods figured prominently in temples which had previously been dominated by the local population, such as the temple of Bel in block J 3-5 and the temple of Zeus Megistos. Unfortunately, however, we do not know whether or not the original cults persisted in these sanctuaries. During the Roman period these temples appear to have been dominated by the military and there is no clear proof that the local population of Dura participated in the cult of Palmyrene gods. We may presume that these gods were mainly worshipped by soldiers who served in the Cohors XX Palmyrenorum, a regiment of Palmyrene origin. The painting representing the tribune Julius Terentius and his men sacrificing to three Palmyrene deities suggests that these gods functioned as the regiment's tutelary deities. Not all the men who served in it were of Palmyrene origin, however, although the fact that they were stationed with this ethnic unit presumably encouraged them to participate in the cult of deities that were not their own.

It follows from the materials discussed in the previous chapters that people of Palmyrene origin demonstrated a remarkable loyalty to their local gods. However, their religion did not simply copy religion in Palmyra itself. The most conspicuous difference between the religion of Palmyrenes in Dura-Europos and religion in Palmyra itself is the small number of Palmyrene deities that are attested in Dura. Over sixty deities were worshipped in Palmyra, but only few of them were the object of a cult in Dura-Europos. A comparison between the religion of Palmyrene merchants and Palmyrene soldiers shows the religious preferences of these two groups to be different. Whereas Bel and his associates were popular with Palmyrene merchants, Iarḫibol and Malakbel figured most prominently among Palmyrene soldiers. Apparently, then, transformation of social position led to changes in religion. The difference between the religion of Palmyrene merchants and that of soldiers testifies to the interaction between social realities and forms of religious life.

Palmyrene merchants constituted a small and close-knit community that gathered in sanctuaries exclusively visited by Palmyrenes, the temple of Bel in the necropolis and the temple of the Gaddê. Apart from the Gad of Dura, all deities attested in these temples are distinctively Palmyrene. The most conspicuous feature of these gods is the municipal significance of their cult in Palmyra. Bel and his associates Iarḫibol and Aglibol were the chief deities of Palmyrene merchants and the tutelary deities of the temple of Bel, the city temple in which all inhabitants of Palmyra gathered, irrespective of their origin or social background. On monuments from Dura-Europos, Bel's triad is frequently accompanied by the god Arṣu, the tutelary deity of a sanctuary of one of the four 'tribes' or city quarters of Palmyra. In this capacity, he acquired a municipal status and became one of the official gods of the city. The municipal significance of Gad Tadmor, the tutelary deity of Palmyra who was worshipped in the temple of the Gaddê, is already apparent from her name. She was also the object of a cult in the temple of Bel in Palmyra, which confirms that this was the prime civic sanctuary. The god Nabû, a statuette of whom was found in the temple of the Gaddê in Dura-Europos, was also closely connected with the city god of Palmyra. He played a prominent role in the Palmyrene version of *Enuma elish*, the Babylonian epic of creation which celebrated Bel's supremacy.

In view of the role of religion in the process of identity construction, it can be said that the attachment to the official gods of Palmyra manifests the wish of the Palmyrene community to preserve its local cultural identity in a foreign environment. The adherence to their local origin is readily explained by their social position. Merchant groups may be characterized as small communities that live in close contact with, and are largely dependent upon, their city of origin. The worship of their city gods inspired the Palmyrene residents of Dura with a sense of belonging to a specific place and played a major role in the formation and maintenance of their community. In this respect it is noteworthy that the cult of Baalshamin, the only Palmyrene cult in which both Palmyrenes and local inhabitants of Dura-Europos participated, had no official status in Palmyra at the time his sanctuary was founded in Dura-Europos.

The identity that the religion of the expatriates served to create and maintain was primarily collective. As a small community in a foreign environment, the Palmyrenes of Dura searched for a common religious ground. Their preference for the gods of their native city is explained by the fact that the cult of these deities was not confined to a particular group, but touched upon the entire community. In this respect their religion mirrors religious organization of Palmyra itself. However, the preference for communal deities implies that the family gods of individual immigrants lost their importance. In this respect, the religion of Palmyrene expatriates differs from the religious situation in Palmyra, where a host of family gods were venerated alongside the gods of the city. Outside Palmyra, detached from their social context, these gods lost their importance. Even in the *diwan* of a private house in Dura, the official gods of Palmyra were pre-eminent.

The preponderant role of the gods of the city and the diminished importance of family gods is also characteristic of Palmyrene merchants who resided in other localities. Hence neither the distance from their native city nor the cultural setting of their new environment had any affect on this religious tendency. The shift comes, so to speak, from within and is due to the social position of the group.

The religion of Palmyrene merchants therefore mirrored the civic aspect of religion in Palmyra. In turn, the need of these communities for a communal religious framework may have contributed to the success of a religious development in Palmyra that occurred at the beginning of the first century CE. The rise of the Palmyrene caravan trade and Rome's involvement in the oasis brought about a centralization of Palmyrene society and religion. In this process, several groups obtained economic and political dominance and managed to turn their family gods into the gods of the city by means of cultic incorporation and ritual affiliation. Aglibol, the family god of the Bene Komare, came to function as one of the attendants of the city god, and Astarte, the family god of the Bene Mita, was worshipped as Bel's female companion in his temple. The most prominent sanctuaries of the city were represented around the cella of the temple of Bel, and processions connected the sanctuaries in the four quarters of the city with the city temple. Concomitantly, a host of other family gods who had formerly been the object of cults in Bel's sanctuary were ousted from it. Although this centralization of religious life in the oasis was initiated by internal political and economic developments, the Palmyrene diaspora, with its need for a communal religious identity, contributed to its success.

The fact that Palmyrene merchants continued to worship their local gods did not exclude their participation in the official religion of their new residence. The coexistence of both levels of religious involvement is exemplified by the two cult reliefs from the temple of the Gaddê, which represent the Gad of Tadmor and the Gad of Dura. Whereas Gad Tadmor embodies the tutelary goddess of the oasis, who was worshipped in Palmyra's city temple, the Gad of Dura can be identified as Zeus Megistos, the city god of Dura. The presence of this local god in a Palmyrene sanctuary bears witness to the respect that Palmyrene immigrants paid to the major cult of their new residence. Religion, politics and social structure were inextricably interwoven in antiquity. By honouring the god of the city, the Palmyrenes submitted to the socio-political institutions his cult embodied. Hence this relief testifies to the wish of Palmyrene immigrants to integrate into their new surroundings. Although the evidence in this respect is scanty, there are no reasons to assume that the Palmyrenes interpreted the city god of Dura in the context of their own religion. On the contrary: it follows from a comparison between the iconography of this relief and religious representations from Palmyra that they conceived of this god as a typically Durene deity, distinct from their own.

The fact that Palmyrene expatriates adopted the religion of their new residence may serve as a warning that their religious conservatism should not be overemphasized. It is possible, even likely, that social relations with the local population prompted individual Palmyrenes to join local cult groups. However, it is precisely because these people became integrated into the religion of their surroundings that such cases are bound to escape our notice. Some of the personal names in Greek inscriptions and graffiti applying to local deities are common in Palmyra, opening up the possibility that they pertain to people of Palmyrene origin. However, given the wide dissemination of most of these names, it is virtually impossible to establish the Palmyrene origin of these individuals with certainty. The belief in the religious conservatism of Palmyrene migrants therefore partly results from the nature of the sources at our disposal.

Like Palmyrene merchants, Palmyrene soldiers who served in the Roman army submitted to the religion of their new environment. This was, first and foremost, the army itself. Palmyrene soldiers adhered both to the official gods of Rome and to gods who were especially popular among soldiers, such as Mithras and Jupiter Dolichenus. As for the local cults of Dura-Europos, they were particularly devoted to the tutelary deity of the city in which they resided.

The adoption of religious practices that were current in the Roman army did not exclude the adherence of Palmyrene soldiers to their own local religious traditions. However, compared to Palmyrene merchants, we note a significant contrast in their choice of local gods, in that Bel and the municipal deities of Palmyra hardly figure in their religion. Instead, Palmyrene soldiers show a strong preference for Iarḥibol and Malakbel, two gods typical of religion in the oasis, but lacking the explicit civic connotations of Bel and his group. Thus, although no longer centred upon their city, the religion of the troops still testifies to a devotion to their ethnic origin. Through the worship of their native gods they asserted and maintained a communal and cultural identity.

The religious disposition of Palmyrene soldiers in Dura-Europos was basically the same as that of their fellow-citizens stationed elsewhere in the Roman empire. As was the case with the Palmyrene merchants in Dura, their religion was hardly influenced by specific local circumstances. All over the Roman empire, Palmyrene soldiers favoured Iarḫibol and Malakbel. These two gods owed their popularity among the Palmyrene military to the fact that they were solar deities, an emphasis that represents an innovation in relation to the religious culture of Palmyra. This shift should be understood in the context of the Roman army, in which solar deities enjoyed increasing popularity from the second century CE onwards. Thus even the two gods by whose means Palmyrene soldiers retained a sense of local identity demonstrate an assimilation of religious ideas typical of the Roman army. It follows from the religious preferences of Palmyrene soldiers that their city of origin no longer constituted the main frame of reference in the establishment of their identity. Although the worship of their local deities instilled in them a sense of belonging to a specific ethnic group, this group was subordinate to Rome.

APPENDIX

ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS OF PALMYRENE CULTURE IN DURA-EUROPOS

This appendix offers a catalogue of the archaeological remains of Palmyrene culture in Dura-Europos. The monuments included are restricted to those with a bearing upon Palmyrene religion. They consist of inscriptions and graffiti in the Palmyrene, Greek and Latin languages, figural representations on reliefs and wall paintings, and the architectural remains of religious buildings. This body of material is our main source of information on the Palmyrene community of Dura-Europos and serves as the point of departure for the description and analysis of its social and religious history which is the subject of the first part of this study.

The Palmyrene materials from Dura-Europos were never published collectively. The present catalogue aims to make them more easily accessible; furthermore, it lists the most important publications with respect to the various monuments and, if necessary, suggests corrections and revisions of previous interpretations. The remains of Palmyrene culture in Dura-Europos are described throughout the ten preliminary reports of the excavations. Not only do these reports lack thematic indices, which makes the selection of the Palmyrene materials a time-consuming undertaking, but the descriptions and interpretations proposed in the excavation reports are preliminary; they frequently need revision in the light of data found during subsequent excavations and research. In addition to the materials described in the excavation reports several studies have been published which deal with specific aspects of Palmyrene culture in Dura-Europos. In 1939, Robert du Mesnil du Buisson published the Palmyrene Aramaic inscriptions from the city in *Inventaire des inscriptions palmyréniennes de Doura-Europos (32 avant J.-C. à 256 après J.-C.).* Delbert Hillers and Eleonora Cussini incorporated a somewhat revised version of this collection in their corpus *Palmyrene Aramaic Texts*, which appeared in 1996. Palmyrene sculpture is extensively described and analysed by Susan Downey in her final report on the stone and plaster sculpture from Dura-Europos (1977). The same author provides an overview of the history of Palmyrene religious buildings in

Dura-Europos in her study ***Mesopotamian Religious Architecture. Alexander Through the Parthians***, published in 1988. Apart from studies which deal with specific aspects of Durene culture, the Palmyrene monuments from Dura have also been discussed in various articles and monographs about Palmyra itself.

The attribution of Palmyrene characteristics to archaeological remains is a precarious matter. The present selection of inscriptions, figural representations and architectural remains presupposes several criteria which need to be made explicit. Epigraphic sources provide the most evident instances of Palmyrene culture; among these, inscriptions in the Palmyrene Aramaic script are manifest remnants of Palmyrene culture. The Palmyrene background of Greek and Latin inscriptions is more difficult to establish. Included in this category of inscriptions are those which mention Palmyrene deities and those in which the dedicants are explicitly identified as Palmyrenes. In addition, I have included inscriptions that have been found in a predominantly Palmyrene context. Palmyrene onomastics have not been used as a criterion for selection. Apart from several names that are typically Palmyrene, personal names from Palmyra are attested elsewhere in Syria and Mesopotamia. For this reason personal names do not unequivocally testify to Palmyrene influence, let alone guarantee the Palmyrene origin of an individual. However, personal names in inscriptions with Palmyrene characteristics may provide additional information on the origin of these individuals. The attestation of a particular name in inscriptions from Palmyra substantiates the hypothesis that the individual in question is of Palmyrene origin, a possibility strengthened when the name is attested in other Durene inscriptions with Palmyrene characteristics, or when it is rare in other texts from the city.

Written sources have played a decisive role in the selection of the figural monuments. Reliefs or paintings with inscriptions which meet the criteria listed above have been included. In addition, I have included monuments that have been found in a predominantly Palmyrene context. Neither the style nor the iconography of representations unequivocally proves we are dealing with remnants of Palmyrene culture. For this reason both features have been excluded as criteria for selection. Style and iconography do play a role, however, in the analysis of monuments which have been labelled remnants of Palmyrene culture on epigraphic and contextual grounds. By comparing the style and the iconography of these monuments with monuments from Palmyra and Dura respectively, we may hope to assess a degree of cultural and, possibly, religious interaction.

The selection of temples, in turn, is determined by the Palmyrene character of the inscriptions and representations that have been found in them. In cases where most finds from a temple display Palmyrene characteristics, its architecture and building history will be discussed in detail. This applies to five sanctuaries: the temple of Bel in the necropolis, the temple of Zeus Kyrios-Baalshamin, the temple of the Gaddê, the religious building in block M5 and the Mithraeum during the first period of its existence. Other finds displaying Palmyrene characteristics have been found in sanctuaries dominated by other ethnic groups among whom Palmyrenes were only lodgers. Neither the building history of these temples nor the remainder of the materials found in them, will be dealt with extensively in this appendix.

In order to reconstruct the process of religious interaction between the Palmyrene community and the other inhabitants of Dura-Europos, we have to determine whether the archaeological remains which display Palmyrene characteristics pertain to the Palmyrene community or to other groups. The attribution of archaeological material to ethnic groups is, of course, fraught with difficulties and entails the risk of circular arguments. In themselves neither the occurrence of the Palmyrene script, names of Palmyrene deities, Palmyrene onomastics, representations of Palmyrene gods, nor the fact that a monument was found in a Palmyrene context, prove that this monument originated in the Palmyrene community. Rather, it is by adding up these characteristics that we may hope to assign them to Palmyrenes or to people under Palmyrene influence. The final evaluation of the material assembled here takes place in the first part of this study.

The arrangement of this catalogue has been determined by the selection criteria listed above and by the aim of reconstructing the social and religious development of the Palmyrene community over the course of time. The materials are arranged according to the place where they were found, since the context plays a decisive role in the selection and interpretation of the remains. In line with the selection criteria I shall discuss the epigraphic materials first and then proceed to the figural monuments, following this, where relevant, by the building history of the sanctuary where they were found. Where possible, the inscriptions, figural monuments and architectural remains are listed chronologically, with the aim of thus clarifying the social and religious development of the individual sanctuaries. Likewise, the find locations are arranged chronologically, according to the time Palmyrenes were first attested there. This, in turn, provides an insight into the social and religious development of the Palmyrene community of Dura-Europos as a whole.

The collection of Palmyrene material from Dura is extensive, but it should be remembered that it represents only a tiny part of the total number of finds from this city. Palmyrenes were in fact less prominent than the number of pages in this appendix might suggests. Furthermore, as with every reconstruction based on archaeological sources, our knowledge is tied to the progress of the excavations. So far about one-quarter of the city has been explored. The recent discovery in Dura-Europos of a Palmyrene relief amply demonstrates that future excavations may complement our picture of the history of Palmyrenes in the city.

THE TEMPLE OF BEL IN THE NECROPOLIS

On the plateau outside the fortified city, about 150 m. to the north-west of the main gate, the foundations of a temple were found. The excavators named it after its location in the necropolis, a name that has been generally accepted. However, the name 'necropolis temple' is misleading, since the temple is not related to the cult of the dead.[1] The inscriptions that were found in the sanctuary show that the god Bel was its tutelary deity.

INSCRIPTIONS

1. *PAT no. 1067*

Palmyrene inscription on a gypsum slab, H. 0.28 m., W. 0.40, found on the rear wall of *naos* 1.
Present whereabouts unknown. Published: *InvD,* 3-4, no. 1; *TEAD* VII-VIII, 319-320, no. 916, pl. LV, 1; Milik, *Dédicaces*, 304 and 369; Teixidor, *Pantheon*, 2-3.

byrḥ sywn šnt 2
79 hw zbdbwl
br bʿyṣw dy mn bny
gdybwl wmlkw br
rmw dy mn bny kmrʾ
ʿbdw hyklʾ lbl

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[1] *TEAD* IX, II, 2.

wyrḥbwl

In the month Sivan, (in) the year 279 (= June 33 BCE), Zabdibol, the son of Ba^{c}yaṣu, of the Bene Gaddibol, and Maliku, the son of Ramu, of the Bene Komare, made the shrine for Bel and Iarḥibol.

l.1: The date, the early summer of 33 BCE, makes this the oldest inscription found in Dura-Europos so far.[2]

l. 2: *hw* is not to be read as a pronoun, but as an exclamation.[3]

ẓbdbwl, Zabdibol, 'gift of Bol', contains the element Bol, the original name of Palmyra's supreme deity.[4] Zabdibol is a typical Palmyrene name and very common in Palmyrene onomastics.[5] In Dura the name is attested several times, invariably in a Palmyrene context. *ẓbdbwl* is attested in two Palmyrene graffiti from the temple of the Gaddê (below, nos. 20 and 22). The name is transcribed in Greek Ζαβδιβωλος. The name Ζαβδιβῶν, attested in a dipinto dated 194 CE in the so-called 'house of the banquet' in Dura, is probably a misspelling of this name (below, no. 38). The Latin transcription Zabdibolus is frequently attested in the military papyri from Dura.[6]

l. 3: *b^{c}yṣw,* Ba^{c}yaṣu. The reading of this name is not certain. The Palmyrene letters *ṣ* and *ḥ*, are very similar and hence the reading *b^{c}yḥw* is equally possible.[7] Neither of the two names is attested in inscriptions from Palmyra or Dura-Europos. The reading *b^{c}yṣw* is the more probable. The meaning and composition of *b^{c}yḥw* are highly problematic, whereas *b^{c}yṣw* is a name of Arabic origin, which is fitting for a member of the Bene Gaddibol, a clan of Arab origin.

l. 4: *bny gdybwl* the Bene Gaddibol are a well-known Palmyrene clan.[8]

mlkw, Maliku. Probably a shortened form of some name composed with *mlk*, 'king'. The name is attested in all Semitic dialects in Syria, and one of the most common personal names in Palmyra.[9] In Dura *mlkw* and the variant spelling *mlkʾ* are attested in several Palmyrene inscriptions (below, nos. 11; 12a; 14a; 19; 45; 50). The Greek transcriptions Μάλιχος, Μάλικος or Μάλχος, and Latin Malchus are likewise common (below, nos. 3; 13; 15; 45).[10] It may be inferred from the context of these inscriptions that the majority of these individuals are of Palmyrene origin. One of the ancestors of Maribelos, the individual who rebuilt the sanctuary in the necropolis in the second century CE, is called Μάλιχος (below, no. 3). In all likelihood, this is the Maliku mentioned in the present inscription.

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[2] *TEAD* VII-VIII, 319. *InvD*, 4, followed by *PAT*, erroneously date the inscription in 32 BCE.

[3] J. T. Milik, ***Dédicaces faites par des dieux (Palmyre, Hatra, Tyr) et des thiases sémitiques à l'époque romaine*** (Recherches d'épigrahie proche-orientale 1, Paris 1972), 369. Cf. *PAT* nos. 166, 1168 and 1198 (n.d.).

[4] Chapter I, 44.

[5] J. K. Stark, *Personal Names in Palmyrene Inscriptions* (Oxford 1971), 16-17 and 85.

[6] *TEAD PP*, index, 439-440.

[7] The reading *b^{c}yṣw* was proposed to Du Mesnil du Buisson, *InvD*, 59, by Cantineau, and is followed by Milik, *Dédicaces*, 304. However, Du Mesnil du Buisson, *InvD*, 4 reads *b^{c}yḥw*. This reading is followed by *TEAD* VII-VIII, 318-319, and *PAT* no. 1067.

[8] *PAT* nos. 2779 (39 CE); 2801 (52 CE); 0263 (108 CE).

l. 5: *rmw,* Ramu or Remu. An Arabic name, 'N.N. is exalted'; a hypocoristicon containing the root *rmy*, 'exalt'. Parallels are *rmʾ*, *rmy* and *rwmʾ*.[11] The present inscription provides the only instance of the name in Palmyrene inscriptions from Dura-Europos. The variant *rmʾ* is attested in an old Syriac inscription from the temple of Atargatis in Dura.[12] The Greek transcriptions of the names *rwmʾ* and *rwmyʾ*, ʽΡούμης[13], and its female counterpart ʽΡουμαία or ʽΡουμέα[14], are frequently attested in Dura from the first century onwards. The name is by no means confined to Palmyrene residents of Dura. It follows from the inscription from the temple of Aphlad, dated 54 CE, that it was a common name in the middle Euphrates region.[15] *rmw* is attested once in Palmyra and twice in Hatra.[16] The variants *rmʾ*, *rmy* and *rwmy* are common in Palmyrene, Hatrene, Nabatean and Edessene onomastics.[17]

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[9] Stark, *Personal Names*, 32-34, and 95; G. L. Harding, *An Index and Concordance of Pre-Islamic Arabian Names and Inscriptions* (Toronto 1971), 564-565; J. Cantineau, *Le Nabatéen*, vol. 2 (Paris 1932), 114-115. Instances of the Greek transcription of this name are equally numerous and widespread. Cf. M. Sartre, *Bosra. Des origines à l'Islam* (Paris 1985), 214.

[10] In addition, the name is attested in the following inscriptions which cannot unequivocally be ascribed to Palmyrenes: *TEAD* IV, 172-173, no. 351 (temple of the Palmyrene gods, n.d., probably Roman period); *TEAD* IV, 174, no. 358 (exterior wall of room K, temple of the Palmyrene gods, n.d., Roman period); *TEAD* IV, 122-125, nos. 245 and 248 (house of Nebuchelus, ca. 235-240 CE); *TEAD* V, 65-66, no. 405 (graffito from a house in block G2, n.d.); *TEAD* V, 231: no. 567 (graffito from the praetorium, n.d., Roman period); *TEAD* II D 4, D 34, and D 35 (graffiti from the Palmyrene gate, n.d.); *YCS* 1955, nos. 159 and 170 (dipinti on potsherds, n.d.). For the Latin name, see the many instances in the military papyri listed in the index of *TEAD PP*, 435.

[11] Stark, *Personal Names*, 112. Parallels and discussion; Cantineau, *Nabatéen*, vol. 2, 146; S. Abbadi, *Die Personennamen der Inschriften aus Hatra* (Hildesheim - Zürich - New York 1983), 164.

[12] H. J. W. Drijvers and J. F. Healy, *The Old Syriac Inscriptions of Edessa and Osrhoene. Texts, Translations and Commentary* (HdO 42; Leiden 1999), 191-192, Bs1.

[13] F. Cumont, *Fouilles de Doura-Europos 1922-23*, 2 vols. (BAH 9; Paris 1926) 444-445, no. 125 (graffito at the entrance of the odeon in the temple of Artemis, n.d., Roman period); *TEAD* I, no. 46 (altar found at the Palmyrene gate, n.d., Roman period); *TEAD* VI, 249, no. 742 (graffito found in wall street, n.d.); *TEAD* IV, no. 282 (uncertain reading; graffito from the house of Nebuchelus, ca. 235-240 CE); *YCS* 1955, 143: no. 8 (temple of Zeus Megistos, n.d., Roman period).

[14] Cumont, *Fouilles*, 436, no. 110 (temple of Atargatis, 61-62 CE); Cumont, *Fouilles*, 419-420, no. 69 (temple of Artemis, 39-40 CE).

bny kmrʾ, the Bene Komare are a well known clan in Palmyra, which came to function as one of the four 'tribes' of the city.[18]

l. 6: *hyklʾ*, 'shrine', is an architectural term frequently attested in Palmyrene inscriptions. In the majority of the examples the word designates the cella of a sanctuary; Greek equivalent ναός.[19] In all likelihood it has the same meaning in the present inscription. In one or two instances the word is used for the entire complex; in Greek ἱερόν.[20]

2. *TEAD VII-VIII, 320, no. 917, pl. LIV, 5*

Ten fragments of a block of gypsum 0.05 m. thick, comprising about one third of the total inscription, originally perhaps 0. 33 m. x 0. 43 m. were found in *naos* 1. Only the lower part can be reconstructed. Three small fragments cannot be placed. The square alphabet points to a date around 100 CE.[21] Presently at YUAG. Published: K. Dijkstra, *Life and Loyalty. A Study in the Socio-Religious Culture of Syria and Mesopotamia in the Graeco-Roman Period Based on Epigraphical Evidence* (RGRW 128; Leiden 1995), 272-273.

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[15] Below, no. 5, for the earliest datable instance of the Greek name.

[16] Stark, *Personal Names*, 49; Abbadi, *Personennamen*, 49.

[17] *PAT* no. 0947 (n.d.); Cantineau, *Le Nabatéen*, vol. 2, 164; H. J. W. Drijvers, "New Syriac Inscriptions", *ARAM* 5 (1993), 157-159; Drijvers and Healy, *Old Syriac Inscriptions*, 189-190, Am11 (third century CE);

[18] *PAT* nos. 0315 (17 BCE); 2766 (6 BCE); 0460 (4 BCE); 1509 (beginning 1st century CE); 1510 (beginning 1st century CE); 0261 (21 CE); 1352 (24 CE); 1353 (25 CE; wrongly dated in *PAT*); 0268 (28/ 29 CE); 1347 (45 CE; wrongly dated in *PAT*); 1134 (67 CE); 1942 (122/ 123 CE); H. Ingholt, "Inscriptions and Sculptures from Palmyra I", *Berytus* 3 (1936), 109 (182 CE); H. Ingholt, "Deux inscriptions bilingues de Palmyre", *Syria* 13 (1932), 278-89 (Greek), and Milik, *Dédicaces*, 37 (Palmyrene) (198 CE); *PAT* nos. 1944 (n.d.); 1540 (n.d).

[19] *PAT* nos. 1352 (24 CE) and 1347 (45 CE -wrongly dated in *PAT*-designating the cult niche of the temple of Bel; cf. M. Gawlikowski, *Le temple palmyrénien. Etude d'épigraphie et de topographie historique* (Palmyre VI; Warszawa 1973), 71); *PAT* nos. 1561 and 1662 (both 89 CE; designating the cella dedicated to Bel Ḥammon and Manawat); *PAT* nos. 1667 (199 CE) and 1671 (n.d.) (from the Palmyrène). Bilingual: *SB* III, 55-59, no. 44 (130-131 CE). Probably also *SB* III, 44-45, no. 32 (n.d.). The inscriptions distinguish between *naos/haikla* and *pronaos*: Schlumberger, *PNO*, 135.

[20] *PAT* no. 0259 (bilingual, 137 CE). *PAT* no. 1558 (243 CE), probably refers to the entire complex as well.

[21] *TEAD* VII-VIII, 320. Followed by C. B. Welles, "The Gods of Dura-Europos", *Beiträge zur alten Geschichte und deren Nachleben. Festschrift F. Altheim*, vol. 2 (ed. R. Stiehl and H. E. Stier; Berlin 1969), 62.

[– – –] τ[ὸν] ναὸ
ν Β[ή]λῳ θεῷ
ὑπ[ὲρ τῆς ἑ]αυτ
οῦ κ[αὶ τ]έκνων
καὶ [ἀδε]λφῶν σ
ωτ[ηρία]ς κατ᾽ εὐχή[ν]
[- - - -] this shrine to the god Bel for the well-being of himself and (his) children and (his) brothers as a votive gift.

l. 1: The Greek word ναός, shrine, accords well with the meaning proposed for Palmyrene *hykl*ʾ, that occurs in the dedicatory inscription no. 1, discussed above.

l. 2: In contrast to the dedicatory inscription discussed above, the present inscription presents Bel as the sole deity to whom the sanctuary is dedicated.

ll. 3-6: The benificiaries consist of the dedicant, his children (sons) and his brothers. This formula is common in Palmyra and Dura-Europos and usually accompanies major dedications.[22] In all probability, therefore, the inscription commemorates a major event with respect to the *naos* of the sanctuary, possibly a rebuilding. In contrast to the previous inscription, this is a private dedication.

3. Pl. I. *TEAD VII-VIII, 320-322, no. 918, pl. LV, 2* (revised reading)
Block of gypsum, H. 0. 50 m., W. 0.67 m., found on the floor in front of the door of ***pronaos*** 1. Originally, it may have been set above its door. The editors note that their transcription is in many ways highly conjectural and tentative. I have not been able to collate the reading by means of the stone itself. According to the editors of *TEAD* VII-VIII, the inscription is in YUAG. Unfortunately, however, it was not found here. I have tried to confirm and supplement the reading by means of the original photograph. Although the reading of this inscription is conjectural, it is fairly certain that it records the career of Maribelos who constructed various buildings, equipped them with cult implements for the worship of Bel, served as a priest, departed (dying perhaps), and left his son as successor.

1 Ἔτους δ̣π̣υʹ [Δ]α̣ι̣σί[ου–]
2 Εἰμὶ Μαριβῆλος υἱὸ̣ς [– – – –] μ̣[– – –]υ̣ς Μαλίχ̣[ου]

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[22] Dijkstra, *Life and Loyalty*, 274.

3 οἱ πρότεροί μου γον̣εῖς ἀ[νήγειραν ναὸν Βήλωι]
4 καὶ μετ̣̓ ἀ̣τοὺς ἀνήγε̣ι̣ρα ἐγὼ [– – – – – – – – – – δεύτερον ?]
5 καὶ ἄλλον ναὸν παρακείμενον [προτῶι ναῶι ἔτευξα ?]
6 καὶ κ̣λ̣ι̣ν̣ὴν χρυσέην καὶ ἀργυ̣ρ̣έ̣η̣ν̣ κ[αὶ – – –]
7 χλ[ανί]δ̣α̣ λ̣ε̣υ(κο)χροέην καὶ πο̣[ρ]φυ̣ρ̣έ̣η̣ν̣ κ̣α̣ὶ̣ [– – – –]
8 ω̣ι μνα[ει] ἰ̣δ̣ι̣α̣ πέντε ὁμοῦ ὁλκ̣ὴ̣ μ̣ν[αῖ πέ]ν̣τ̣ε̣
9 τῶι θεῶ[ι – – – δ]ὲ̣ ἔτευξα Βήλωι β̣α̣ [*ca. 12 letters*]
10 τ̣ο̣[ῦτον τὸ]ν̣ ναὸν πέντε ἕτ̣ε̣ρ̣α̣ [– – –] ε [–] ω [– – – – – – – –]
11 εὐχαρ̣ι̣σ̣τ̣ῶ̣ δ̓ α̣ὐ̣τ̣ῶι εὐεργετικῶι̣ [πρὸς] τ̣ὸ̣ν̣
12 υἱὸν Δάββου[ν ὃν ἀ]ν̣τ̣ ἐμὲ ἔλιπον ἱερέ̣α̣ [*ca. 3 letters*]
13 οἰκοδόμοι Δ [*ca. 4 letters*]᾿ Οχχάμας Βαφ̣ι̣λ̣[*ca 4 letters*]

1 In the month Daesius of the year 436 (= 173 CE)
2 I am Maribelos the son of [. . . . .] Malikos
3 My ancestors [erected the shrine of Bel]
4 and after them I erected [the second ?. . . ?]
5 and [I made] the other shrine that lies beside [the first shrine]
6 and the gold and silver bed [and. . .]
7 white and purple over garments [. . .]
8 five [. . . .] -of five mina's weight each
9 for the god [and ...] I made for Bel, [. . . . . .]
10 [for this] naos five other [. . . . .]
11 I say thanks to him, the Benificent One, [for]
12 (my) son Dabbous whom I left behind as priest in my place [- - -]
13 the architects D[- - - -] Ochamas, (son of ?) Baphil[- - -]

l. 2 The opening statement, 'I am' is frequent in Phoenician votive inscriptions and graffiti.[23] It likewise occurs in Jewish Aramaic dedicatory inscriptions and graffiti. The formula is attested several times in Aramaic graffiti from the synagogue in Dura-Europos.[24]

Μαριβῆλος, Maribelos, 'Bel is my lord'. Although a good Palmyrene name, Maribelos is not attested in Aramaic inscriptions from Palmyra. In Dura, the name is attested in several Greek inscriptions. With one exception, all refer to the same person, who lived around the middle of the third century CE.[25] It may be inferred from line 12 that Maribelos served as a priest of the sanctuary in the necropolis.

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[23] *KAI* 12, 17, 18, 43, 48, 49, 54.

[24] *TEAD Synagogue*, 269-276, nos. 2, 13, 15-17; J. Naveh, "Graffiti and Dedications", *BASOR* 235 (1979), 27-28.

Μάλιχος, Malikos. *mlkw* is common in Dura as well as Palmyra (above, no. 1). In Dura most individuals with this name can be identified as Palmyrenes. Maribelos likewise fits a Palmyrene context well, and we may therefore assume that the dedicant mentioned in the present inscription was of Palmyrene origin. Maliku is named as Maribelos' most remote ancestor. A certain Maliku, the son of Ramu, founded the temple in the necropolis in 33 BCE. This fits Maribelos' assertion in line 3, that he descends from one of the founders of the sanctuary. In view of the available space and the distance in time that separates Maliku from Maribelos, it is not possible that the inscription provides the entire genealogy of the family. However, abbreviated genealogies are common in Palmyrene inscriptions. Such lists usually end with the most remote and/or esteemed ancestor.

l. 3: The reading of the first half of the line is certain. Apart from the first letter, the second half is illegible. There is room for about 16 letters. The reconstruction proposed here covers the available space. By analogy with line 4 we may restore the first word as ἀ[νήγειραν].The restoration ναὸν Βήλωι accords well with the information on the temple's history provided by the other inscriptions. Maribelos' most remote ancestor is called Maliku. A certain Maliku, the son of Ramu, founded the shrine of Bel in 33 BCE (above, no. 1). Apparently, then, the administration of this Palmyrene sanctuary in Dura-Europos was hereditary. This is confirmed by line 12.

l. 4-5: It follows from line 5 that an architectural term has to be restored at the end of line 4. Apart from ναός, mentioned in line 5, any term is possible. The *naos* referred to in line 5 undoubtedly designates the *naos* of the new complex (room 12), which was added to the west of the original temple.[26] The preceding line must also refer to this part of the temple.

ll. 5-8: By analogy with line 9, I propose to restore ἔτευξα at the end of line 5. Though the reading of the following lines is uncertain at crucial points, it is obvious that they list precious cult implements donated to the new temple. At the beginning of line 6 we may perhaps read κλίνη, 'bed', instead of βάθρον, 'base' (of a statue), or πλοκή, 'basket', which are proposed by the editors. A cultic bed is attested in inscriptions from Palmyra.[27] Unfortunately we can no longer identify the five objects mentioned in lines 8 and 10. Apparently the value of these objects is determined by their weight.

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[25] Written Μαριβῆλος, or Μαραβῆλος: *TEAD* IV, 119-130, nos. 240, 245, 255, 260, 263. All date between 235-240 CE, and originate from the same locality, the house of the merchant Nebuchelus. This Maribelos was probably the companion of the merchant (cf. *TEAD* IV, 136). In addition, a certain Μαριβῆλος Βαρσαμίσου is attested on a bitumen sherd from the third century CE: *YCS* 1955, 182, no. 167.

[26] Cf. the discussion of the architectural remains, below, 209-211.

l. 9: θεός mentioned at the beginning of this line, obviously refers to the tutelary deity of the new *naos*. It is not clear whether this god can be identified as Bel or as another Palmyrene god.[28]

l. 11: εὐεργετικός, 'the benificent one'. Although normally used for people, it is likewise applied to deities.[29] When used for people, it is usually followed by the name of the person in question. Since a personal name is missing here, εὐεργετικός is in all likelihood the epithet of a deity, probably of the god Bel, mentioned in line 9. The editors propose to restore εὐεργετικῷ π̣[ρος]... However, in view of the systematic use of the *iota adscriptum*, it is probable that we have to read a *iota,* instead of a *pi.*

l. 12: Δάββους , Dabbous, trancribes the name *dʾbw*, which is known from Aramaic texts from the first millenium BCE.[30] The name is not attested elsewhere in Syria and Mesopotamia during the Roman period. Possibly, therefore, it is an abbreviated form of the name *ʾmdbw*, 'mother of his father', an Aramaic name attested twice in Palmyra.[31] [᾿Ι]μηδαβοῦς, the Greek transcription of this name, is attested in a graffito from the so-called 'house of the banquet' in Dura-Europos (below, no. 37b). Dabbous succeeds his father as priest of the temple. A priesthood which is handed down from father to son is attested in Palmyra as well as in Dura.[32]

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[27] Gawlikowski, *Temple*, 69.

[28] Brown, *TEAD* VII-VIII, 323, conjectures that the *naos* was dedicated to Arṣu or Malakbel. He is followed by S. B. Downey, *Mesopotamian Religious Architecture. Alexander through the Parthians*, (Princeton 1988), 98. This cannot be inferred from the inscription proper. The small fresco fragment picturing a military god that was found on the floor of *naos* 12 does not provide any proof in this respect either (below, 208).

[29] Liddell and Scott, 712. For the instances in Greek inscriptions, see L. Robert, *Le sanctuaire de Sinuri près de Mylasa*, vol 1: *les inscriptions grecques* (Mémoirs de l'institut français d'archéologie de Stamboul publiés sous la direction de M. Albert Gabriel; Paris 1945), 23; idem, *Hellenica* V (Paris 1948), 21, note 1.

[30] R. Zadok, *On West Semites in Babylonia during the Chaldaean and Achaemenian Periods. An Onomastic Study* (Jerusalem 1977), 195.

[31] Stark, *Personal Names*, 5 and 69. Milik, *Dédicaces*, 329, suggests that the name derives from *dy ʾb [ʾ]bw hy*: 'of the father of his father'. This name is not attested in Palmyra or Dura. I therefore prefer the solution proposed above.

[32] *TEAD* VII-VIII, 128-134, nos. 867-869 (resp. ca. 86-87 CE; 116-117 CE, and 118-119 CE). Gawlikowski, *Temple*, 34.

l. 13: ʼΟχχάμας, Ochchamas, ‘of dark complexion’. This name is best known from its occurrence in the legend of the founding of the church of Edessa under the patronage of Abgar V Ukkama.[33] The editors propose to read δ[ὲ Βαρι]οχχάμας. I find it more probable that the *delta* is the first letter of a personal name; it is clear from the plural οἰκοδόμοι that we have to restore the names of at least two individuals. Furthermore, the name Βαρι]οχχάμας is unparalleled in Dura, whereas the name ʼΟχχάνος (incorrect for ʼΟχχάμας) is attested in an inscription from the temple of Aphlad dated 54 CE.[34]

Βαφι̣λ[– – –] is perhaps to be restored as Βαφιλάδος, Baphilados, an abbreviation of Βαφαλάδαδος, ‘son of Aphlad’.[35] The latter name is attested elsewhere in Dura.[36] The god Aphlad is venerated in a sanctuary administered by people from Anath, a village on the Euphrates south of Dura. From this sanctuary comes the slightly different form Βαφλαδαδ.[37] All instances occur in a local Aramaic context and predate the Roman period. Whereas the name is traditionally at home in the middle Euphrates, no instances are known from Palmyra. The same is true for the name ʼΟχχάμας, and we may therefore conclude that the architect or architects were locals.

WALL PAINTING

fig. 11 *Fresco fragment picturing a military god (Arṣu)*

Fragment of wall painting, H. 0.20 m., W. 0. 37 m., found on the floor of *naos* 12a. National Museum of Damascus 8386. Published: *TEAD* VII-VIII, 317 and 323, fig. 82 (Toll).

The fragment represents an armed, male figure, carrying a round shield in his left hand, who leans upon the spear he is holding in his right hand. Originally, the total height of the figure must have been about 0. 30 m. The top part of the helmet and the lower part of the legs are missing. The figure is clean shaven. The brim of the helmet is peculiarly shaped and originally belonged to a clock-shaped helmet.

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[33] *Syriac Dictionary ʾkmʾ*. Cf. H. J. W. Drijvers, “The Abgar Legend”, *New Testament Apocrypha*, vol. 1 (ed. W. Schneemelcher; Cambridge Louisville 1991), 492-500.

[34] *TEAD* V, 113-116, no. 418. Cf. *TEAD* VII-VIII, 446-447; Milik, *Dédicaces*, 138.

[35] Reading proposed by Milik, *Dédicaces*, 139. Cf. *TEAD* VII-VIII, 447.

[36] *TEAD* VII-VIII, 168, no. 871 (temple of Adonis, 153 CE); Cumont, *Fouilles*, 425, no. 79 (temple of Artemis, 129-130 CE).

[37] *TEAD* V, 125, no. 439 (n.d.). This reading is proposed by Milik, *Dédicaces*, 139.

The military clothing, the clock-shaped helmet, the spear and the round shield are typical of the iconography of the Palmyrene god Arṣu. This painting prompted the editors of *TEAD* VII-VIII to restore the name Arṣu in the inscription dated 173 CE (above, no. 3), and to assume that Arṣu was the tutelary deity of the second *naos*. It is, however, unlikely that this painting was the cult image of the tutelary deity of *naos* 12. The original height of this figure was only about 0. 30 m. A cult image of this size is not likely. The dimensions of the fragment suggest that it originally belonged to a painting on which a group of deities was represented. Arṣu frequently figures as one of the gods associated with Bel. The so-called 'Otes-fresco' from room K in the temple of the Palmyrene gods is the best known example from Dura-Europos (below, 300-302). Inscriptions from the sanctuary in the necropolis label Bel the tutelary deity of the sanctuary. By analogy with the 'Otes-fresco' it may therefore be presumed that a similar composition originally adorned *naos* 12.

The style of the painting is purely linear. The colours are brown or black and red. The face and the hands have a pinkish tone. The style resembles the wall paintings from the Mithraeum, which suggests a date in the first half of the third century CE.

SCULPTURE

Fragment of a bas-relief representing a military figure (Iarḥibol ?)

Made of local gypsum, H. 0. 12 m, W. 0. 9 m., found in *naos* 1. Present whereabouts unknown. Published: *TEAD* VII-VIII, 316, pl. XXXVIII, 4 (Toll); Seyrig, "Héraclès-Nergal", *Syria* 24 (1945), 77; *TEAD Heracles*, 27, no. 26, and 54-56, pl. X, 2.

The small relief represents a male figure, standing frontally. The figure is badly damaged. The head, right arm and part of the chest are lacking. He holds a spear in his right hand, and an object which cannot be identified with certainty in his left hand. According to Toll and Downey it is a club, but Seyrig opts for a torch or some other object. A mantle covers the figure's left arm. He appears to wear a bracelet on his left arm, like the god Iarḥibol on the relief from the temple of the Gaddê (below, 253-254) and on the fresco representing Julius Terentius and his men from the temple of the Palmyrene gods (below, 304-307). The god wears a cuirass with three rows of flaps. The line of the top of his boots is visible just below the knees.

Toll, who first published the relief, identifies the figure as Heracles. Downey rightly notes that the cuirass and spear are at odds with the characteristic iconography of Heracles in the Roman period.[38] Apart from the object in his left hand, the figure strikingly resembles the god Iarḫibol on a relief from the temple of the Gaddê. Downey therefore concludes that the relief represents Heracles assimilated to a member of the Palmyrene triad. This solution is not convincing. The identification of this figure as Heracles rests entirely upon the identification of the object in the left hand as a club. However, it is equally possible that it is a torch. We know of no representation of a military god holding a torch. However, on a relief from the Palmyrène a radiate god wearing a long dress is represented carrying a torch. This figure probably is to be identified as the sun god Shamash.[39] Shamash is never represented wearing a military outfit and, consequently, it is not likely that he is represented on the relief from the temple in the necropolis. However, the figure on the relief is very similar to Iarḫibol. Like Shamash, Iarḫibol was a solar deity. Although we know of no representations of Iarḫibol carrying a torch, it may be inferred from the relief from the Palmyrène that the attribute befits a solar deity. In view of Iarḫibol's role in the cult of the temple in the necropolis exemplified by the inscriptions, it is therefore most probable that the relief represents this god.

The style of the relief is very crude. Its main characteristic is misunderstanding in the treatment of the body. It follows from the local gypsum that it was fabricated at Dura, in all probability by a local sculptor. It is impossible to establish a date on the basis of the style.[40]

BUILDING HISTORY

The history of this sanctuary can be divided into two major periods (fig. 5).[41] The original temple comprised a court that was entered by a porch in the east wall of the enclosure. This entrance was situated on the same axis as the sanctuary unit that projects from the back of the court. It consisted of a square *pronaos* (1) with a small *naos* (1') projecting from its rear wall. The wall behind the *naos* was much thicker than the other walls and contained an empty space. In the court, in front of the *pronaos*, was a portico (2). Adjoining the *pronaos* to the south was a big rectangular room (10). This room lay outside the enclosure and could not be entered from the temple itself. Three sides of the court were occupied by narrow rooms. In the east, beyond the main entrance, was a rectangular room (4), a kind of *propylaeum*. Along the northern side of the court probably was a portico (5), and a small room along the western side (6) abutted on a second portico which preceded the *pronaos*. A narrow door in the western wall of portico 5 led into a second enclosure, provided with a cistern (18). In due time several constructions were added to the original temple. At a certain point a monumental step altar was erected in the court between the main entrance and the sanctuary unit, and against the south wall of the temple enclosure two new rooms were built (7 and 8). They probably functioned as meeting places.

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[38] *TEAD Heracles*, 55.

[39] *PNO* 70-71, pl. XXXI, 1; H. J. W. Drijvers, *The Religion of Palmyra* (Iconography of Religions XV, 15; Leiden 1976), pl. LVI, 1.

[40] *TEAD Heracles*, 62-71, esp. 71.

[41] *TEAD* VII-VIII, 310-316, figs 80-81 (Toll; description of the remains); *TEAD* VII-VIII, 322-325 (Brown; date and cult); Downey, *Mesopotamian Religious Architecture*, 96-99.

In the second period of its existence a new temple complex was built to the south of the original temple as a result of which the dimensions of the temple doubled. The southern temple could be entered from the northern court through a narrow door in the south wall of portico 2. Its main entrance, however, was on the eastern side of the court. From this it may be inferred that the southern and northern temple functioned as separate units. The ground plan of the southern temple closely resembled that of the northern complex. At the back of the court was a sanctuary unit consisting of a rectangular *pronaos* (11) and a small *naos* that projected from its west wall (12).[42] South of the *pronaos* was a small room (13), which presumably functioned as a sacristy. Along the south wall of the court were three rooms of unequal size (14-16). They probably functioned as meeting places. The northern wall of the new court created a re-entrant space between the southern and the northern court, which was used to create a new room, that opened into the northern court (9). The enclosure at the back of the northern sanctuary (18) was enlarged and now abutted on the second *naos*.

The original temple can be dated to 33 BCE due to the inscription that commemorates the dedication of a *haikla* to Bel and Iarḫibol (above, no. 1). This inscription was found in sanctuary unit 1, and probably refers to this part of the temple.[43] It follows from constructional evidence that the room adjacent to the southern side of the *pronaos* (10) is contemporary with the sanctuary unit. The same probably is true of the temple enclosure. It is not certain whether the rooms surrounding the court also belonged to the original temple; they may have been constructed later. The fragmentary Greek inscription that can be dated around 100 CE commemorates building activities in the ***naos*** of the temple, but it is impossible to be more specific (above, no. 2).[44] The monumental step altar and rooms 7 and 8 are certainly later than the original temple but cannot be dated exactly.[45] We can only be certain that they were built before the southern complex was constructed. The Greek inscription from 173 CE that commemorates the erection of a second ***naos*** probably relates to ***naos*** 12 (above, no. 3). Consequently, it may be assumed that the southern complex, or at least part of it, was constructed shortly before 173 CE.

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[42] Downey, *Mesopotamian Religious Architecture*, 98.

[43] And not to the whole complex, as was suggested by Brown, *TEAD* VII-VIII, 322.

THE TEMPLE OF ZEUS KYRIOS-BAALSHAMIN

To the south of the main gate, against tower 16, a sanctuary was built that was called the temple of Zeus Kyrios-Baalshamin after the deity represented on the relief that was set into the face of the tower.

INSCRIPTIONS

4. *TEAD VII-VIII, 307, no. 914*
Inscription cut into the face of the tower, directly above an altar.

῾Ρούμης ἐπόει ἔτους μτʹ

Translation: Roumes made (this) in the year 340 (28-29 CE)

῾Ρούμης transcribes the Arabic name *rwm*ʾ. The variant *rmw* is attested in the Palmyrene inscription dated 33 BCE from the temple of Bel in the necropolis of Dura (above, no. 1). The Greek transcription of the name is attested several times in Dura. The earliest instance of the name dates from 54 CE and occurs in an inscription from the temple of Aphlad.[46] The name is also attested in Palmyrene, Nabatean, Hatrene and Edessene onomastics. Consequently, it provides no proof that Roumes was of Palmyrene origin. The inscriptions from the temple of Zeus Kyrios and the temple of Aphlad are separated by 16 years. Theoretically, therefore, it is possible that they refer to the same person. The appeal of this possibility is enhanced by the proximity of both temples; the temple of Aphlad is situated in block N8, one block to the south of the temple of Zeus Kyrios.

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[44] For Greek ναός as the equivalent of Palmyrene ***hykl***ʾ compare above, note 19. The inscription may commemorate the construction of a new floor and the erection of the base for a cult statue at the rear of the ***naos***, constructed at some point after the foundation of the sanctuary: *TEAD* VII-VIII, 311.

[45] The step altar was probably erected after the middle of the first century CE because this type of altar is not attested in Dura-Europos at an earlier date: *TEAD* VII-VIII, 322.

The inscription does not specify what Roumes made. From the fact that the text was engraved above the altar it may be inferred that it commemorates its construction. It is not entirely clear, however, whether the altar was erected or fabricated by Roumes. In inscriptions from Dura the verb ποιέω can be used both ways.[47] It is noteworthy that the inscription does not specify Roumes' contribution, and omits his patronym. Dedicants of major objects usually identify themselves by their family names and specify their gift. Furthermore, in case of a major dedication the text would have been inscribed on a stele instead of on the wall of the tower. Consequently, it is most probable that Roumes was the craftsman who fabricated the altar. This implies that he did not necessarily belong to the clientèle of the sanctuary.

5. Pl. II. *PAT no. 1089* (revised reading)

Bilingual inscription, cut in the lower margin of the relief that represents the god Zeus Kyrios - Baalshamin (below, 219-220). The Greek text is written on the right, the Palmyrene on the left. A vertical line separates the two texts, leaving no intervening space. The present inscription provides the only instance of a truly bilingual inscription in Dura-Europos from the Parthian period.[48] The surface of the stone is damaged and as a result several letters are missing, completely or in part. Despite the damage, the reading of the Palmyrene text is certain. In the Greek text only the reading of the concluding word of the final line is problematic. YUAG 1935. 45. Published: *InvD*, 13-14, no 23; *TEAD* VII-VIII, 307-309, no. 915b-c.

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[46] *TEAD* V, 114, no. 418.

[47] A. Perkins, *The Art of Dura-Europos* (Oxford 1973), 72.

[48] The only other instance dates from the Roman period (244 CE): below, no. 63.

by⸢r⸣[ḥ] tš⸢r⸣y šnt 343
mṣbʾ dnh nṣb b[rʿ]th br
l⸢wq⸣[ʾ] wʾ bbwhy brh
lbʿl šmyn ʾlhʾ

Σέλευκος Λευκίου ἐδώρησ
α τὸ[ν] ἀνδριάντα [τ]ῷ Δεῖ κυρ
ίῳ καὶ ’Αβαβοῦις υἱὸς αὐτοῦ
ἔτους γμτ´ μηνὸς Ἀπελλ
αίου. μνησθῇ ’Ιαραῖος [.]ΛΑΦΤΕΣ

Palmyrene: In the month Tishri, of the year 343 (=31 CE) Bar[ʿat]eh, the son of Leuq[a], and his son Ababuhi, erected this stele for Baalshamin, the god.

Greek: Seleukos, the son of Leukios and his son Ababouis dedicated this image to Zeus Kyrios, in the month Apellaios of the year 343 (=31 CE). May [the sculptor] Iaraios be remembered.

l.2 P: *mṣbʾ*. ‘stele’, i.e. an image of a deity and an object of worship. In Palmyra the word either denotes a relief representing one or several gods, the representation of a god or gods on a relief, or a cult image.[49]

l. 2 G: ἀνδριάς, ‘image’, literally ‘an image of a man or god, a statue’.[50] The present inscription provides the sole instance of the word in inscriptions from Dura-Europos.[51] In Palmyra ἀνδριάς is invariably used for statues in the round of men or women. The Palmyrene equivalent is *ṣlm*.[52] It is unlikely that the word has to be translated as statue.[53] Not only are we dealing with a relief; in the case of a statue we would expect to find the equivalent *ṣlm* in the Palmyrene text. However, in view of the meaning of the Greek word in Palmyra, it is equally unlikely that ἀνδριάς denotes the relief.[54] In all probability, therefore, we have to read 'image'. The most plausible explanation is that ἀνδριάς refers to the figure of Zeus Kyrios-Baalshamin, which is modelled upon a cult statue or relief of the god.[55] An interesting parallel is provided by a relief from the year 54 CE which represents the god Aphlad.[56] The dedicatory inscription of the relief labels the monument an ἀφείδρυσις.[57] This word obviously denotes the figure of Aphlad, which is copied after the cult image of the god in Anath.[58]

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[49] Relief representing one or several deities: *PAT* nos. 0008 (n.d.); 2625 (138 CE); 1511 (n.d.); 0318 (55 CE). Deities depicted on a relief: *PAT* no. 1700 (n.d.). Cult image or idol (either a statue or a relief): *PAT* nos. 1929 (115 CE); probably also 2632 (182 CE); 0410 (n.d.); 0411 (n.d.); 1099 (n.d.; cf. below, no. 16). On the various meanings of the word see: “mṣbʾ”, *DNWSI*, 676-676; “mṣbʾ”, *PAT*, 385; M. Gawlikowski, *Monuments funéraires de Palmyre* (Warsaw 1970), 10, note 10; idem, “Le premier temple d'Allat”, *Resurrecting the Past. A Joint Tribute to Adnan Bounni* (ed. P. Matthiae, M. van Loon and H. Weiss; Istanbul 1990), 106.

[50] Liddell and Scott, ἀνδριάς, 128.

[51] Two graffiti from the temple of the Palmyrene gods mention εἰκονές; in all probability small statues of deities: Cumont, *Fouilles*, 385-387, nos. 23 (n.d.) and 24 (165-166 CE).

[52] *PAT* nos. 0197 (132 CE); 2769 (171 CE); 0260 (175 CE); 0270 (19 CE); 0294 (193 CE); 1062 (145 CE) and 1063 (198 CE). There is perhaps one parallel for the Durene inscription: *PAT* no. 0197, from the temple of Baalshamin, renders *mṣbt* by ἀνδρίασι; here it denotes to a statue. However, both from a grammatical as well as from a syntactic point of view the word is unusual. M. Gawlikowski, “review of C. Dunant, ‘Le sanctuaire de Baalshamin à Palmyre’”, *Berytus* 22

l. 2 P: *br[ᶜt]h*; Barᶜateh, 'son of Ateh'. Over a century later a very similar name, *brᶜtʾ*, is attested in the so-called 'house of the banquet' (below, no. 43). Here, the name is transcribed in Greek Βαράθη. In Dura, the Greek name is common and is written Βαράθης, Βαργάτης Βαργάτους or Βαγάθη.[59] A person with this name occurs in an inscription from the temple of Atargatis dated five years

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(1973), 146, suggests a Phoenicianism. *ṣlm* also denotes an image on a bas-relief, especially funerary portraits. Here the Greek equivalent is εἰκών: *PAT* no. 0543 (166 CE).

[53] *PAT* 385.

[54] J. Cantineau, *Grammaire du palmyrénien épigraphique* (Cairo 1935), 111; *TEAD* VII-VIII, 308.

[55] This is confirmed by the iconography of Baalshamin, which matches the iconography of the god in Palmyra.

[56] *TEAD* V, 106-112, pl. XIII; *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 7-9, no. 1, and 193-194, pl. I; Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra*, pl. XLVII, 2.

[57] *TEAD* V, 112-113, no. 416 (cf. *op. cit*, 114-116, no. 418).

[58] Liddell and Scott, ἀφίδρῦσις 'setting up a statue'. The word equals ἀφίδρυμα , 'a copy taken from an image of a god or a shrine', cf. ἀφιδρύω,'remove to another settlement, transport'. Cf. L. Robert, *Hellenika* 13 (1965), 124, note 4; idem, "Documents d'Asie Mineure", *BCH* (1977), 109 and 126.

[59] Four persons bearing this name are represented on a fresco in the *naos* of the temple of Zeus Theos, dated in the beginning of the second century CE: *TEAD* VII-VIII, 215-217, nos. 890, 891, 895, 897. They belong to the so called 'Bargates family', otherwise unknown at Dura. A dipinto on the painting in the *pronaos* of the temple of Bel mentions a certain Λυσίας Βαργάτους: Cumont, *Fouilles*, 361, no. 6b. If this dipinto indeed designates the person represented on the painting from the *pronaos,* as Cumont, *Fouilles*, 79, suggests, he probably lived at the beginning of the second century CE. According to Cumont, *Fouilles*, 383-384, the same Lysias is mentioned in no. 21 (but a patronym is missing). A graffito on the south pillar of the *pronaos* of the temple of the Palmyrene gods lists a certain Βαργάτης [Εὐάνδρου and is probably to be dated in the Roman period: Cumont, *Fouilles*, 380-381, no. 18. The same probably is true for the Bargates mentioned in the graffito found on the north wall of the *pronaos* of the same temple: Cumont, *Fouilles*, 391, no. 31. The same name occurs on a graffito from the *pronaos* (room C) of the temple of Artemis, probably from the Roman period: Cumont, *Fouilles*, 444, no. 123. The name also occurs on a potsherd: *YCS* 1955, no. 166, and in a graffito on the Palmyrene gate: *TEAD* II, 129, D. 54.

later than the relief dedicated to Zeus Kyrios-Baalshamin.[60] This inscription lists the members of a religious association devoted to 'the goddess', in all probability Atargatis. Most of the participants have Semitic names. Unfortunately, the name of Bar^{c}ateh's father is lost. It is uncertain, therefore, that we are dealing with the same person. However, it is noteworthy that the person preceding him in the list is called Ababouis, the name of the son of Bar ^{c}ateh - Seleukos. Given the fact that both inscriptions are only separated by five years, it is possible that we are dealing with the same individuals. The name is widely attested in Palmyrene onomastics, as well as elsewhere in Syria.[61]

l. 1 G: Σέλευκος; the Greek name of Bar^{c}ateh. The two names have no relationship with each other. Seleucus Nicator is the presumed founder of Dura-Europos and consequently Seleukos is one the most popular Greek names in the city, especially among members of the Macedonian aristocracy.[62] The name is also attested in Palmyra, but all instances date from the third century CE.[63] The name rarely occurs in the Hauran, but is popular in the region of Damascus and northern Syria.[64] At Hatra it is one of the two Greek names attested in the city.[65] In Syriac inscriptions from Edessa *slwk* is attested frequently.[66]

l. 3 P: *lwqʾ*. The reading of this name is not certain. Du Mesnil du Buisson reads *lwky*, *TEAD* proposes *lwq* and *PAT lwq[y]*. The space on the stone requires a fourth letter. In Palmyra we encounter the name *lwqy*, a variant of *lwqyws*, the Latin name Lucius.[67] In the first century CE, Latin names are confined to people of Roman origin in Palmyra. A Latin name is highly improbable in Dura in 31 CE, at that time a Parthian city.[68] In all probability therefore, we are dealing with a transcription of the Greek name Λεύκιος. Consequently we have to read *lwqʾ*.[69]

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[60] *YCS* 1955, 129-131, no. 2.

[61] Stark, *Personal Names*, 12 and 78, for parallels and diffusion. The name is also attested in Syriac inscriptions from Edessa: Drijvers and Healy, *Old Syriac Inscriptions*, 73-77, As16; 17; 18; 19, and 140-144, As55.

[62] Cumont, *Fouilles*, 341.

[63] Stark, *Personal Names*, 41 and 101. In Aramaic inscriptions from Palmyra the name is spelled *slwqʾ*, *slwqws* or *slwqs*.

[64] Sartre, *Bosra*, 237.

[65] Spelled *slwk*: Abbadi, *Personennamen*, 185.

[66] Drijvers and Healy, *Old Syriac Inscriptions*, 73-77, As16-19, and 140-144, As55.

[67] In Palmyra the Latin name Lucius is transcribed *[lwqy]ws*, *lwqys* or *lqy*. The variant *lwqy* is attested in *KAI* 118. None of the extant inscriptions provides a Greek equivalent of the name. A trilingual (Greek, Latin, Palmyrene) inscription from Palmyra, *PAT* no. 0591 (58 CE), has the Greek name Λούκιος. The same name is attested in *PAT* no. 2824 (n.d.; i.e. the same individual as *PAT* no. 1413 (174 CE)). Both probably transcribe the Latin name Lucius.

[68] Contra *InvD*, 62. Latin names are not attested in Dura-Europos before the Roman period.

l. 1 G: Λεύκιος, Leukios, the Greek equivalent of the Palmyrene name *lwqʾ*. The present inscription provides the only instance of the name in Dura. The name is good Greek and widespread in the Greek world.[70] In the Roman period Λεύκιος is one of the possible transcriptions of the Latin name Lucius.[71] Given the early date of the inscription, however, it is not likely that Λεύκιος transcribes the Latin name. In all probability we are dealing with the Greek name, introduced in Dura by the Macedonian settlers.[72] This accords well with the Macedonian name Seleukos, Leukios gave to his son. Hence the name Λεύκιος suggests the dedicant of this relief belonged to the indigenous population of Dura.

l. 3 P: *ʾbbwhy*, Ababuhi, 'father of his father'.[73] Exact parallels are not attested in Palmyrene inscriptions from Dura, nor are any instances known from Palmyra, the Palmyrène or Hatra. A graffito from Assur that reads *ʾbby*, and an ancient Syriac inscription from Sumatar Harabesi that reads *ʾbbwy*, provide the closest parallels.[74] An abbreviated form of the name, *ʾbb*, occurs in a Palmyrene graffito that was found in tower 19 in Dura-Europos, and on a relief found in the Palmyrene gate (below, no. 58).[75] The names *ʾbb* and *ʾbbʾ* are common in Palmyrene onomastics.[76]

l. 3 G:'Αβαβοῦϊς, Ababouis, transcribes the Aramaic name *ʾbbwhy*. In Greek, the name is attested in two other inscriptions from Dura-Europos.[77] In an inscription dated 37 CE from the temple of Atargatis, a certain Ababouis is listed as a member of a religious association. The variants ’Αβοῦις, ’Αββοῦις, ’Αββούη and Βαβοῦις are frequently attested in Dura.[78] Most names occur in a Semitic, though not specifically Palmyrene, context. The name is not attested in Palmyra. This suggests Ababouis belonged to the inigenous population of Dura.[79] This is confirmed by the name Leukios, the name of his grandfather.

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[69] Cf. the editorial note in *TEAD* VII-VIII, 309, note 2.

[70] Greek parallels are cited in *TEAD* VII-VIII, 309, note 2, and J. and L. Robert, *Bulletin épigraphique* 1984, no. 546.

[71] In Syria the Latin name is also transcribed Λούκιος. Cf. *IGLS* III. 2 nos. 1148, 1196, 1210, and G. Daux, "L'onomastique romaine d'expression grecque", *L'onomastique Latine* (1977), 410. It is noteworthy that this is the spelling attested in inscriptions from Palmyra.

[72] The fact that the name is attested only once at Dura is no decisive argument against this interpretation. Other Greek names, such as Polemocrates and Mnesippus (*TEAD PP*, 104-109, no. 19 (88/89 CE)), also only occur once.

[73] *InvD*, 57; Milik, *Dédicaces*, 327. Milik rightly points out that the name does not derive from the Iranian name Baboi, as Torrey, *TEAD* VII-VIII, 308, suggests.

[74] Assur: W. Andrae and P. Jensen, "Aramaïsche Inschriften aus Assur und Hatra aus der Partherzeit", *MDOG* 60 (1920), 35. Sumatar Harabesi: Drijvers and Healy, *Old Syiac Inscriptions*, 99, As32.

[75] *PAT* no. 1103. The Greek transcription of this name, Βαβουῖς, is attested on two potsherds that were found in the same tower. Cf. below, note 78.

[76] Milik, *Dédicaces*, 60 and 328. Stark, *Personal Names*, 63, connects the name with the word *bbʾ*, 'ripening'. Cf. also *RTP*, 169.

[77] *YCS* 1955, 129-131, no. 2 (37 CE). A graffito on the Palmyrene gate has the slightly different form'Αβαβούιος: *TEAD* II, 134, D 83. Albright suggests the name derives from Nabatean *ḥbybw*. Given the Aramaic transcription in the present inscription, this is unlikely.

l. 5 G: ’Ιαραῖος, Iaraios. The Greek name transcribes the Aramaic name *yrḥy*, Iarḥai. In Dura this name probably occurs in a Palmyrene dedicatory inscription from the temple of the Gaddê, dated around 159 CE (below, no. 11). The name is widely attested in Palmyra and the Palmyrène, but there are very few parallels outside Palmyra's territory.[80] This is explained by the origin and meaning of the name. *yrḥy* is in all probability an abbreviated form of Iarḥibol, an indigenous Palmyrene god, whose cult is confined to Palmyrenes.[81] In Greek the name occurs elsewhere in Dura, albeit much later, in the Roman period. A certain ’Ιαραῖος is mentioned in a graffito inscribed upon the exterior wall of room K in the temple of the Palmyrene gods.[82] The variant ‘Ιεραῖος is attested in two graffiti on the Palmyrene gate.[83] They were probably made by soldiers of Palmyrene origin. Iarhaeus, the Latin transcription of the name, occurs frequently in the military parchments and papyri, especially with members of the Cohors XX Palmyrenorum.[84] It may be inferred from the Palmyrene origin and character of the name, as well as from the Palmyrene context of other instances of this name in Dura-Europos, that the Iaraios mentioned in the present inscription was probably of Palmyrene origin.

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[78] Milik, *Dédicaces*, 327. Βαβοῦις is attested four times in Dura: *TEAD* VI, 252-253, nos. 754 and 764 (potsherds from tower 19, n.d.); *TEAD* VII-VIII, 172, no. 976 (temple of Adonis, n.d., Roman period); *YCS* 1955, 183, no. 172 (potsherd, n.d., third century CE). ’Αβοῦις occurs twice in the temple of Aphlad: *TEAD* V, 114-116, no. 418 (54 CE) and 125, no. 438. ’Αββοῦις is attested in the temple of Adonis: *TEAD* VII-VIII, 174, no. 879 (dated in the Roman period), and in *TEAD PP*, nos. 23 and 32.

[79] Cf. *SEG* VII, 607: J. J. Finkelstein, *Late Old Babylonian Documents and Letters* (New Haven 1972), 13 obv. 7: A-bu-ba-ia.

[80] In Greek the name is attested in an inscription from Nazala, a village situated on the road between Palmyra and Homs: *IGLS* V, no. 2697 (157 CE). It is known that Palmyrenes lived in Nazala.

[81] Stark, *Personal Names*, 91.

[82] *TEAD* VI, 174-175, no. 358. Room K was a chapel devoted to several Palmyrene deities. Cf. below, 295.

[83] *TEAD* I, 37, R. 11a; *TEAD* II, 143, D. 132.

[84] *TEAD PP*, index, 433.

l. 5 G: .[.]ΛΑΦΤΕΣ. The reading of this word poses difficulties. Torrey suggests to restore γλάφτες, a hybrid form of Greek γλύπτης, and Aramaic *glwp*, 'sculptor'.[85] Alternatively, the editors of *PAT* suggest this word transcribes the personal name *ḥlptʾ*.[86] The solution proposed by the editors of *TEAD* is to be preferred, for this best fits the preceding μνησθῇ. In Dura as well as in Palmyra the artist frequently prays to be remembered in the concluding part of the inscription.[87]

6 a-b. Pl. II. *TEAD VII-VIII, 307, nos. 915 a and b*
Cut in the top margin of the relief above the head of the worshipper:

Σέλευκος Λευκίου

Seleukos, (the son) of Leukios
Cut in the top margin of the relief to the right of the head of the god

Ζεύς

Zeus

In addition, a graffito and a dipinto (*YCS* 1955, 144-145, nos. 13 and 14) were found on the outside wall of the temple, to the right of the door jamb, at a level with the top of the door. From this it is clear that both date from a time when the fill in wall street lay above the door sill, i.e. at the time the temple was abandoned. For this reason it is not likely that they are related to the cult of the temple. They are therefore omitted from the present discussion.

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[85] *TEAD* VII-VIII, 309, note 2. Followed by *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 2 (note, however, that Downey *op. cit.*, 239, states that this relief was not made at Palmyra, nor fabricated by a Palmyrene craftsman). In an inscription from Berenike in Egypt (Chapter VI, note 90), we find the spelling *glyp*. The Aramaic root *glp* possibly derives from Greek γλύφω: J. P. Brown, "The Septuagint as a Source of Greek Loan-Words in the Targums", *Biblica* 70 (1989), 208. The defective spelling *glp* is attested in a Palmyrene inscription from Dura-Europos; cf. below, inscription no. 59.

[86] Transcribed in Greek *Chalaphatos*: H. Wuthnow, *Die semitischen Menschennamen in griechischen Inschriften und Papyri des vorderen Orients* (Studien zur Epigraphik und Papyruskunde i/ 4; Leipzig 1930), 119.

[87] Instances in inscriptions from Dura: below, nos. 32 and 47 (from the 'house of the banquet', 194 CE); Cumont, *Fouilles*, 443, no. 121; *TEAD* VII-VIII, 104: no. 853 (ca. 240 CE). Instances in inscriptions from Palmyra: *PAT* nos. 1941 (62 CE) and 0320 (113 CE).

SCULPTURE

Pl. II. *Relief representing Zeus Kyrios-Baalshamin*

Relief cut from a rectangular slab of white limestone, H. 0. 52 m, W. 0. 35 m. YUAG 1935. 45. Published: *TEAD* VII-VIII, 292-301, pl. XXXVII (Hopkins); Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra*, pl. XXV; *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 31-34, no. 10, pl. IV, fig. 10; H. E. Mathiesen, *Sculpture in the Parthian Empire. A Study in Chronology*, vol 2 (Aarhus 1992), 197, no. 174, fig. 54.

The chalky white stone is neither Palmyrene nor local. It was perhaps imported from the area of Anath, a village on the Euphrates, situated about 120 kilometres to the south of Dura.[88] The relief was found *in situ* against tower 16, positioned 1. 35 m. from the north corner, 5. 15 m. above the ground. [89] The sanctuary was open and the relief was protected by a covering fixed to the tower by means of four sockets. Given its small dimensions, it must have been difficult for onlookers on the ground to discern the scene, let alone to read the inscription on the plinth.[90] The inscription and the dipinti (above, nos. 5 and 6 a-b), identify the figure on the right-hand side as the god Zeus Kyrios-Baalshamin, and the figure on the left-hand side as Bar^{c}ateh-Seleukos, the son of Leukios, the dedicant of the relief.

A bearded male figure, identified by the inscription as the god Zeus Kyrios-Baalshamin, is represented on the right-hand side of the relief. The god, seated on a plain stool covered with an elaborate cushion, occupies about two-thirds of the stele. His head and torso are shown frontally, while his legs are depicted in profile to his right. Baalshamin holds a sceptre in his left hand. In his right hand he holds a bouquet of grain and various sorts of fruit (grapes, a pomegranate and possibly an olive branch). The face of the god is disproportionally large and almost reaches the top border of the relief. As a consequence the small cylindrical *polos* on his head extends beyond the relief and covers the top border of the stele. Baalshamin has a moustache, a short curly beard and wavy hair that falls to his shoulders. He is dressed in a mantle and a long-sleeved tunic, which covers the top of his boots.

Seleukos, the dedicant of the relief, is standing on the left-hand side of the relief. Despite the fact that his head reaches the top of the relief, he gives the impression of being much smaller than the deity. Seleukos is slimmer and his head is considerably smaller than Baalshamin's. Seleukos stands frontally and holds a ram, his offering to the deity, in his arms. Like the god, he wears a long-sleeved tunic and a mantle. He probably wore plain shoes. Although most of his face is missing, it is clear that he was bare-headed and had short, close-cropped hair.

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[88] *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 236.

[89] *TEAD* VII-VIII, 45, fig. 20.

[90] Let alone to view it from the street, as Perkins, *Art of Dura-Europos*, 72, suggests.

The relief can be dated to 31 CE on the basis of the dedicatory inscription on its plinth. Stylistically, this relief resembles a number of reliefs that are all made of the same chalky white limestone, and date from about the middle of the first century CE. The carving is crisp and neat, and the figures are characterized by hieratic formalism and expressionism.[91] This group of sculptures shows some striking similarities with a number of sculptures from Palmyra dating from the same period.[92] This accords well with the Palmyrene origin proposed for the sculptor of the relief of Zeus Kyrios-Baalshamin.[93] The chalky white limestone, however, is not used for sculptures from Palmyra. This suggests that the reliefs were fabricated in a workshop in Dura which was at least partly run by sculptors of Palmyrene origin.

BUILDING HISTORY

The history of the sanctuary can be divided into three building phases (fig. 6). The first sanctuary was a roofless enclosure that was built against the northern half of tower 16, in a by then vacant area of the town.[94] The complex was entered by a doorway in the east wall of the enclosure. Opposite the entrance, against the face of the tower, stood a monumental altar, 1. 10 m. square, made of mud brick. Its original height can no longer be reconstructed.

The small bas-relief representing Zeus Kyrios-Baalshamin was let into the wall of the tower, about one metre to the left of the altar. It is peculiar that the relief was not placed directly above the altar. Brown's suggestion that this was done in order to protect it from the rising smoke is not convincing.[95] Instead, one can wonder if the relief really functioned as the cult relief of the temple, as is traditionally assumed. Apart from its extraordinary placement, the small dimensions of the relief are difficult to reconcile with this function. Moreover, it is known that a larger object was placed below this relief in the centre of the tower in the third century CE.[96] In contrast to the small relief representing Zeus Kyrios-Baalshamin, this object was removed when the temple was filled with earth in order to strengthen the city wall around the middle of the third century CE. From this is may be inferred that this object was considered to be more important, which in turn suggests that the relief of Zeus Kyrios-Baalshamin was not the cult image of the temple in the third century CE.[97] Whether the same holds true for the earlier period, we do not know.

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[91] *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 236-238, for an extensive discussion of the stylistic features of this group.

[92] *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 239-242, for a discussion of these stylistic similarities. I cannot agree with Downey's conclusion, *op. cit.* 239, that these reliefs were not made by Palmyrenes, and are an independent variant of the style attested in Palmyra.

[93] Above, 219-220.

[94] *TEAD* VII-VIII, 284-286, fig. 1 (Brown); Downey, *Mesopotamian Religious Architecture*, 101-102, fig. 46.

In the second period an annex was added to the northern side of the enclosure.[98] This annex consisted of a roofed room (Z 3) that was preceded by a court (Z 2). Both the room and the court were surrounded by low benches, from which it may be inferred that they functioned as meeting places. The annex was not accessible from the enclosure and could only be entered from the street. The enclosure remained exactly as before. It was only after a considerable amount of time that a step altar, about 3. 00 m. high, was erected around the first altar.

In the third and final building period the original temenos was almost completely rebuilt and considerably enlarged. Despite this expansion its lay-out remained virtually the same. To the north the enclosure now comprised all of tower 16 and to the south two third of court Z2. The remaining portion of court Z2 came to function as an entry corridor to chamber Z3, which remained unaltered. The monumental step altar in the court was dismantled and upon its remains a new altar of less than half the height was built. The face of the tower about and beneath the bas relief was twice whitewashed. At some point, probably in the third century, a rectangular object of some sort was attached to the wall directly beneath the relief of Zeus Kyrios-Baalshamin, for the whitewash of an area of 0. 52 m. wide and 1. 09 m. high was never redone. Perhaps a second cult relief was placed here.

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[95] *TEAD* VII-VIII, 286.

[96] *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 31-34; idem, *Mesopotamian Religious Architecture*, 101-102.

[97] The removal or protection of cult reliefs and paintings in the period preceding the siege is well known in Dura. The relief found in the room in block M5 was turned around and covered with plaster in order to protect it (cf. below, 280); the paintings in the *naos* of the temple of the Palmyrene gods were protected by a mud-brick wall before they were covered by the embankment: Cumont, *Fouilles*, 35.

[98] *TEAD* VII-VIII, 286-287 , fig. 74, and 290.

The first sanctuary can be dated to 28 CE by means of the inscription that commemorates the erection of the altar. The relief dedicated to Zeus Kyrios-Baalshamin was installed three years later, in 31 CE. Blocks M8 and N7, facing the enclosure, were vacant at the time of its foundation. These blocks were built up soon after the erection of the temple of Zeus Kyrios-Baalshamin. The annex of the sanctuary was probably constructed shortly after the creation of these new blocks.[99] The third and final rebuilding was probably prompted by the destruction of the sanctuary during the earthquake of 160 CE. This may be inferred from the rise of the floor level of the third temple.

THE TEMPLE OF THE GADDE

In block H1, located to the south of the main street in the centre of the city, the remains were found of the temple of the Gaddê, named after the two cult reliefs that represent the Gad of Palmyra and the Gad of Dura respectively. The reliefs are dated 159 CE and this date serves as the *terminus ante quem* for the construction of the final sanctuary, which probably began a few years earlier, around 150 CE.[100] According to the excavator, Frank Brown, three buildings preceded the final construction. The information on the first two buildings is extremely meagre and the reconstruction of their ground plan is very tentative.[101] Nothing is known about their inhabitants or visitors. The fact that Palmyrenes visited the third and fourth temple does not necessarily imply that this was already the case in the two preceding periods.[102] Both building phases are therefore omitted from the present discussion.

The oldest material that informs us about the deities that were venerated at this place and their worshippers stems from the building that preceded the final construction.[103] Both the graffiti and the fragments of mural paintings show this temple was visited by Palmyrenes. For reasons of clarity we shall first discuss the material from this building and subsequently turn to the final building.

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[99] This can be inferred from the fact that the walls of the buildings opposite the sanctuary are founded on the same ground-level as the first temple: *TEAD* VII-VIII, 286-87 and 290.

[100] Below, 260.

[101] *TEAD* VII-VIII, 220-228, figs. 52-54; Downey, *Mesopotamian Religious Architecture*, 117, fig. 50.

[102] Downey, *Mesopotamian Religious Architecture*, 98. Contra Brown, *TEAD* VII-VIII, 256.

[103] Brown labels this building period III. Since we have not discussed the buildings from periods I and II, Brown's phases are omitted from the present discussion.

THE TEMPLE PRECEDING THE TEMPLE OF THE GADDE

DIPINTI

In the floor of the southern part of the *pronaos* of the final sanctuary about four hundred fragments of painted plaster were found.[104] Roughly 100 other fragments were found beneath the floor of the newly constructed *naos* and in the rubble used to block a doorway in the northern half of the *pronaos*.[105] From the fact that the fragments were used as building material in the final temple, it may be inferred that they adorned a preceding structure. Among the fragments are graffiti and bits of painted plaster. The latter consist of representations of figures with dipinti.

7. PAT no. 1110

Fragment of painted plaster. Red-brown letters, painted vertically on a blue background. Found in the fill of the floor of the southern part of the *pronaos* (2a). Published: *InvD*, 26-27, no. 44; *TEAD* VII-VIII, 282-283, no. 913 a.

šlwtʾ

Shaluta

According to Torrey, only the first and the last letter are clearly visible. He proposes to read *špylʾ*.[106] Du Mesnil du Buisson's reading *šlwtʾ* best fits the drawing.[107] The name is not attested in inscriptions from Palmyra or Hatra.

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[104] Room 2a in the groundplan of the earlier structure.

[105] Room 2b in the groundplan of the earlier structure.

[106] *TEAD* VII-VIII, 282-283. Tentative reading followed by Stark, *Personal Names*, 144.

[107] Followed by *PAT*.

8. *PAT no. 1111*

Fragment of painted plaster. Red-brown letters, painted on a grey background. To the right is a border consisting of black, white, red and black bands. The Palmyrene letters are painted vertically, the Greek letters horizontally. Found in the fill of the floor of the southern part of the *pronaos* (2a). YUAG 1935. 557 N. Published: *InvD*, 27, no. 45; *TEAD* VII-VIII, 282, no. 913 b, pl. XXVII, 8.

tymwʾ br [ ]   Θαιμη[ ]

Taimu, the son of[ ] Thaime

tymwʾ is in all likelihood a misspelling of the Arabic name *tymʾ* 'servant', the *wau* being a writing error. *tymʾ* is attested in four other Palmyrene inscriptions from Dura-Europos (below, nos. 32; 54; 70; 72), and likewise occurs in Greek and Latin transcription.[108] *tymʾ* as well as the variants *tymw* and *tymy* are common all over the Semitic world, and are frequent in Palmyrene onomastics.[109]

9. *PAT no. 1112*

Graffito on two plaster fragments, listing at least five persons The fragments were found in the fill of the floor of the southern part of the *pronaos* (2a). The text is damaged to the extent that none of the names can be restored with certainty. Published: *InvD*, 27, no. 45.[110]

[ ] rq
[ ]wz
br w[ ]
br tʾ[ ]
br ʾ[ ]

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[108] Greek: Θέμης (priest on the painting representing the sacifice of Julius Terentius, cf. below, no. 49 b); Θάιμος:*TEAD* V, 23, no. 394 (graffito from tower 14, n.d.); *YCS* 1955, 168, no. 80 (graffito from tower 24, n.d., possibly second century CE); Θαίμης; *TEAD PP* no. 48, 7 (ca. 250 CE). The Latin transcription of the name, Themes, is attested frequently in the military parchments and papyri from Dura: *TEAD PP*, index, 438.

[109] Abbadi, *Personennamen*, 173, for literary references. On Palmyra, see Stark, *Personal Names*, 54.

[110] This text is not discussed in *TEAD*. Instead, *TEAD* has no. 912 (discussed below), a text not discussed in *InvD*. It follows from a comparison of the accompanying tracings that we are dealing with two graffiti.

10. *TEAD VII-VIII, 282, no. 912*

Graffito on a plaster fragment that was found in the fill of the floor of the southern part of the *pronaos* (2a):

- - - - - - - - - - - br
[. . . .] br whblt
[d]kyr ^{c}gylw
br blḥ$^{\supset}$
šmšy

[- - - -] the son of [. . . .], the son of Wahballat. May Ogilu, the son of Bolḥa be remembered. Shamshai

l. 2:*whblt*, Wahballat, is an Arabic name, meaning 'gift of Allat'.[111] By analogy with a Palmyrene graffito from the temple of the Palmyrene gods mentioning 'Maliku, the son of Wahballat' (below, no. 50), the editors propose to restore Maliku at the beginning of this line. However, the present graffito predates the middle of the second century CE, whereas the graffito from the temple of the Palmyrene gods probably dates from the Roman period. Consequently there is no reason to assume that both graffiti refer to the same person. In a bilingual inscription from Palmyra, the name is transcribed Οὐβαλλάθος.[112] This name is not attested in inscriptions from Dura-Europos. In contrast, the Latin transcriptions Vabalathen, Vabalathus and Vaballathus are frequently attested in the military papyri from Dura.[113] The name is common in Palmyrene onomastics.[114]

l. 3: *^{c}gylw*, Ogilu, 'calf'. The present graffito provides the only instance of the name in Palmyrene inscriptions from Dura. The name is not attested in Greek inscriptions from the city, whereas the Latin transcription 'Ogelus' occurs frequently in the military papyri.[115] The name is common in Palmyrene onomastics.[116] The popularity of this name is probably due to the fact that it was considered a shortened form of the divine name Aglibol.[117] A variant of this name, *ᶜglᵓ*, a shortened form of the name *ᶜbdᶜgylw,* is attested in the onomastics of Hatra.[118]

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[111] Stark, *Personal Names*, 85.

[112] *PAT* no. 0267 (120 CE).

[113] *TEAD PP*, index, 439.

[114] Stark, *Personal Names*, 15-16.

[115] *TEAD PP*, index, 437.

[116] Stark, *Personal Names*, 43-44.

[117] Stark, *Personal Names*, 104.

l. 4: *blḥᵓ*, Bolḥa or Belḥa, 'Bol or Bel has seen'. The same name is attested in a Palmyrene graffito from the final temple of the Gaddê (below, no. 19). The name is not attested in Greek inscriptions from Dura, nor are there any instances in Latin. The name is attested several times in Palmyra.[119]

l. 5: *šmšy,* Shamshai. An Arabic name, composed from the name of the sun god Shamash; probably a hypocoristicon of *šmšgrm* or the like. The present inscription provides the only instance of the name in Dura. The name is not attested in Palmyra. One instance is known from Hatra.[120] Shamshai is common in Safaitic inscriptions.[121] The Greek transcription of this name, Σαμσαῖος, is attested for example in Abourène, a village in the middle Euphrates region, and in a locality near Emesa.[122]

WALL PAINTING

In the fill of the floor of the southern part of the *pronaos* (2a) numerous fragments of painted plaster were found that belonged to the decoration of the former building. YUAG 1935. 557 A-Z, and AA. Published: *TEAD* VII-VIII, 232 and 268-271, fig. 72, and pls. XXVI-XXVII.

It follows from the fragments that the painting comprised at least two figures clad in a Romanized military costume. At least one of them carried a round shield and a spear. Originally, these figures were about 0. 94 m. high. They are accompanied by several figures wearing local dress. Some are of the same scale as the military figures, others are about two-thirds their size. They are identified by dipinti in Greek and Palmyrene, several of which are discussed above. An arched aedicula was part of the architectural background. A fragment depicting a border consisting of a black, a white, a red, and a black stripe, suggests that the decoration of the room was divided into several registers.

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[118] Abbadi, *Personennamen*, 141-142.

[119] Stark, *Personal Names*, 9-10 and 76. The name *bwlḥᵓ* 'Bol has seen', is far more popular. Cf. Stark, *Personal Names*, 8 and 74.

[120] Abbadi, *Personennamen*, 52 and 170.

[121] Harding, *Pre-Islamic Arabian Names*, 358.

[122] Wuthnow, *Semitischen Menschennamen*, 105; D. Feissel, J. Gascou and J. Teixidor, "Documents d'archives romains inédits du Moyen Euphrate", *Journal des savants* 1997.1, 38; *IGLS* V, no. 2561.

Although the fragments do not permit an exact reconstruction of the decoration of this room, comparison with other paintings from Dura-Europos gives a fairly good idea about its subject matter. It may be inferred from the Roman military outfit of two of the figures that they were deities. In Dura this costume is characteristic of Palmyrene gods.[123] Combined with the occurrance of the Palmyrene script on plaster fragments from this sanctuary, it is fairly certain that they represent two of the principal gods from Palmyra; Bel, Iarḫibol, Aglibol or Arṣu. The figures in local dress probably represent worshippers. It may be inferred from the accompanying personal names discussed above that they came from Palmyra.

By analogy with other paintings from Dura-Europos, we may suppose that the painting depicted several worshippers sacrificing before at least two deities.[124] Possibly the gods were framed by an aedicula; a motif that is known from the decoration of the temple of Adonis.[125] The smaller figures may have been servants who figured in the background, or worshippers who were depicted in another, smaller register.[126]

A *terminus ante quem* for these paintings is provided by the dedication of the cult reliefs in 159 CE. A more precise dating must be based on a stylistic and technical comparison with other paintings from Dura. According to Brown, they find their closest parallel in the right-hand portion of the Conon murals, and may therefore be assigned to the late first century CE.[127] The use of blue underpainting is unique in Dura.

BUILDING HISTORY

The complex from which the paintings and inscriptions discussed above derive was divided into two sections, each with its own court that could be entered directly from the street (fig. 7).[128] The two compartments were connected by a door in the dividing court wall. Their ground plans are to a large extent each other's mirror image; both had a room in the outer corner of the court, adjacent to the entrance, and a room at the back of the court. The ground plan of the latter provides the major difference between the two complexes. The room at the rear of the southern court (2a) was a single unit, surrounded by benches. From this it may be inferred that it functioned as a meeting room, which was in all likelihood used for dining.[129] The room of the northern court (2b) had a small rectangular chamber on its northern, and a corridor on its western side. This isolating corridor is a feature of the sanctuary unit of some Durene temples and hence suggests that this was the *naos* of the complex.[130] The small rectangular chamber probably served as a sacristy.

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[123] The historical paintings from the synagogue provide the only exception to this rule. On gods wearing Hellenistic or Roman armour in Dura-Europos see *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 203-205. On a relief from the temple of the Gaddê, Seleukos Nikator wears a Hellenistic corselet (cf. below, 246). Aphlad, the god from the village of Anath, wears a cuirass of the Hellenistic type, combined with Parthian trousers.

[124] See, for example, the painting from the temple of Adonis: *TEAD* VII-VIII, 158-163, fig. 44, pls. XIX-XX, and the so-called 'Otes-fresco' from room K in the temple of the Palmyrene gods: below, 30-302.

[125] Above, note 124. These paintings are to be dated after 150 CE.

[126] Cf. the small scale of the servants depicted on the 'Otes-fresco' from the temple of the Palmyrene gods, discussed below, 300-302.

[127] Brown states that the stylistic similarities are obvious. However, in his field-notes he compares the paintings from the temple of the Gaddê with the paintings from the temple of Adonis, and proposes a date early in the second period of paintings, i.e. between 125-150 CE.

When the sanctuary was rebuilt around 150 CE, the two rear rooms were joined to form the *pronaos* of the final sanctuary. At this stage the floor of the southern room was raised in order to match the level of the northern room. The plaster fragments discussed above were found in this fill. Brown conjectures that they adorned the northern sanctuary unit, a hypothesis that suits the identification of the military figures as Palmyrene deities.

Although it is fairly certain that the building was demolished around 150 CE when the final sanctuary was built, there is hardly any evidence from which we can establish the date of its construction. The graffiti and the fragmentary paintings do not provide a firm clue. The proposed date of the paintings at the end of the first century CE is entirely based upon stylistic arguments. Given the poor condition of the fragments, this date is extremely tentative. Ceramic evidence points to the erection of the complex around the middle of the first century CE. Again, this kind of evidence only allows for a rough approximation.[131] Tentatively, we may therefore assume that the sanctuary that preceded the final temple was in use for approximately a century, from about 50 CE until 150 CE.

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[128] *TEAD* VII-VIII, 230-232, fig. 55 (period III); Downey, ***Mesopotamian Religious Architecture***, 117, fig. 51.

[129] According to Brown, *TEAD* VII-VIII, 257, the complex was divided into two sections; one entirely sacred, the other partly secular.

[130] Cf. the temple in the necropolis (above, 210, and the temple of Adonis. For the latter: Downey, ***Mesopotamian Religious Architecture***, 118-122, fig. 53.

[131] Brown, *TEAD* VII-VIII, 232 and 256.

THE TEMPLE OF THE GADDE AFTER 150 CE

Around 150 CE the older sanctuary was thoroughly rebuilt into a temple of monumental dimensions. This temple was used until the fall of the city in 256 CE. The two cult reliefs from this temple were dedicated in 159 CE, and we may therefore assume that the temple was constructed around 150 CE, shortly before the Roman occupation of the city in 165 CE. The longest period of its existence falls into the Roman period. Consequently it can be assumed that the largest amount of material found in this temple dates from the third century CE.

INSCRIPTIONS AND GRAFFITI

11. *PAT no. 1104* (revised reading)
Inscription on the plinth of the niche-aedicula built against the western side of the *pronaos* façade. Present whereabouts unknown. Published: *InvD,* 19-20, no. 38; *TEAD* VII-VIII, 181-182, no. 911, pl. LIV, 4.

ᶜbd mlkw br [yr]ḥy
nṣwr

Maliku, the son of [Iar]ḥai, (the son of) Naṣor has made (it)

l. 1 *mlkw*, Maliku is attested several times in Palmyrene, Greek, and Latin inscriptions in Dura, most of which can be ascribed to a Palmyrene context (above, no. 1). The name is common in Palmyrene onomastics.
[yr]ḥy, Iarḥai. This reading follows *TEAD.* Du Mesnil du Buisson and *PAT* read the final name as *[nṣ]wr*. The first reading is the more probable since it is based upon the stone, whereas Du Mesnil du Buisson worked from a photograph. Moreover, the stone hardly offers enough space for a ***resh*** at the end of the line.[132] Maliku, the son of Iarḥai, the son of Naṣor, is the father of Ḥairan, who dedicated the cult reliefs in 159 CE. It follows from the dedication of the cult reliefs in 159 CE that the sanctuary was rebuilt shortly before this date. The aedicula made by Maliku is placed in front of the rebuilt

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[132] The reading of the Report is followed by M. Gawlikowski, "A propos des reliefs du temple des Gaddê à Doura", *Berytus* 18 (1969), 108-109; idem, "Les princes de Palmyre", *Syria* 62 (1985), 260. Downey, *Mesopotamian Religious Architecture,* 118, and *PAT* no. 1104, follow Du Mesnil du Buisson's reading.

pronaos, and consequently the present inscription has to be dated around the same time. Since both the father and the son contributed to the new temple, we may assume that the rebuilding of the temple was financed to a large extent by the Naṣor family.[133]

12 a-c. Pl. III. *PAT nos. 1094-1096*
Inscription, in three parts, on the relief representing the Gad of Dura (below, 245-247). YUAG 1938. 5314. Published: *InvD,* 16-17, nos. 28-30; *TEAD* VII-VIII, 277-278, no. 907.

a. In the centre:

gdʾ dy dwrʾ ʿbd ḥyrn
br mlkw br nṣwr byrḥ nysn
šnt 470

The Gad of Dura. Ḥairan, the son of Maliku, the son of Naṣor, made (it) in the month Nisan, of the year 470 (= March/ April 159 CE)

b. Right of the main inscription:

slwqws
nyqṭwr

Seleukos Nikator

c. Left of the main inscription:

ṣlm ḥyrn br
mlkw br nṣwr

Translation: Image of Ḥairan, the son of Maliku, the son of Naṣor

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[133] For a discussion of the genealogy of this family and its position in Palmyrene society, compare below, 232.

13. Pl. III. *TEAD VII-VIII, 275, no. 903*
Black dipinto on the top border of the relief representing the Gad of Dura. YUAG 1938. 5314.

> Αἰρά[νη]ς [Μ]αλί[χου]

> *Translation*: Haira[n], (the son) of [M]ali[ku]

14 a-b. Pl. III. *PAT nos. 1097 and 1098*
Inscription on the base of the relief representing the Gad of Palmyra (below, 247-248). The left-hand corner of the relief is lacking. Like the inscription on the relief representing the Gad of Dura it originally consisted of three parts, two of which are preserved. YUAG 1938. 5313. Published: *InvD*, 17-18, nos. 31-32; *TEAD* VII-VIII, 278-279, no. 908.

a. In the centre:

> *gdʾ dy tdmwr ʿbd ḥy[rn]*
> *br mlkw br nṣwr*

> The Gad of Palmyra. Ḥai[ran], the son of Maliku, the son of Naṣor made (it)

b. Right of the main inscription:

> *byrḥ nysn šnt*
> *470*

> In the month Nisan of the year 470 (= March/April 159 CE)

15. Pl. IV. *TEAD VII-VIII, 275, no. 902*
Black dipinto on the top border of the relief representing the Gad of Tadmor. YUAG 1938. 5313.

> Μνησθῇ [Αἰ]ράνης Μαλίχου τοῦ [Νασῶρ]

May [Hai]ran, (the son) of Maliku, (the son) of [Nasor], be remembered

ḥyrn, Ḥairan, is a name of Arabic origin, meaning 'good' or 'excellent', which is very common in Palmyra and is likewise attested in Nabatea and Hatra.[134] Ḥairan, the son of Maliku, the grandson of Naṣor, is the dedicant of both reliefs and is depicted on both of them. The Greek transcription of the name, Αἱράνης, is attested twice in Dura, both times in a Palmyrene context.[135] These examples date from the third century CE and therefore cannot possibly refer to the dedicant of this relief.

mlkw, Maliku, the name of Ḥairan's father, is attested several times in Dura, and is common in Palmyrene onomastics (above, no. 1). Ḥairan's father dedicated the small aedicula placed in front of the ***pronaos*** of the new temple (above, no. 11). Maliku's father Iarḥai is not mentioned in the inscriptions on the reliefs, from which it may be inferred that Naṣor was the most esteemed of Ḥairan's ancestors.

nṣwr, Naṣor, is a name of Aramaic origin, meaning 'chirper'.[136] It follows from no. 11 discussed above, that Naṣor was the grandfather of Maliku and the great-grandfather of Ḥairan. The reliefs from the temple of the Gaddê provide the only instances of the name in Dura. In Palmyra the name is attested in two inscriptions. Both refer to the same person, the great-grandfather of the famous Septimius Odenath, the husband of Zenobia.[137] The great-grandfather of Septimius Odenath must have lived later than the Naṣor referred to in the inscriptions from Dura-Europos and it is therefore impossible that we are dealing with the same person. However, the rarity of this name in Palmyra strongly suggests that we are dealing with people who belonged to the same family. The dedicant of the reliefs therefore belongs to an aristocratic Palmyrene family.[138]

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[134] J. Cantineau, *Le dialecte arabe de Palmyre*, (Beirut 1934), 15. Stark, *Personal Names*, 21-22 and 88.

[135] *TEAD* IV, 82, no. 190 (graffito by a member of the twentieth cohort of Palmyrene archers, from the house of a Nebuchelus, third century CE); *TEAD* IV, 174, no. 358 (graffito on the exterior wall of room K in the temple of the Palmyrene gods; third century CE).

[136] Stark, *Personal Names*, 40 and 100.

[137] *PAT* no. 0558 (n.d.); Gawlikowski, "Princes de Palmyre", 257, no. 13. A third instance possibly occurs on a funerary bust published by K. Michalowski, *FP* I, 211, no. 5, fig. 99: ***mlkw br nbwzbd br mqymw nḥwr***. According to Gawlikowski, "Reliefs du temple des Gaddê", note 16, the last name has to be read ***nṣwr***. This is indeed probable, as the name ***nḥwr*** is unexplained and without parallels (cf. Stark, *Personal Names*, 99). It is not clear whether this individual belongs to the same family.

16. Pl. VI. *PAT no. 1099* (revised reading)
Inscription at the foot of a relief, representing Iarḥibol (below, 253-254). YUAG 1938. 5301. Published: *InvD,* 18, no. 33; *TEAD* VII-VIII, 279-282, no. 909, pl. XXXV; Milik, *Dédicaces*, 74-75.

yrḥbwl ʾ lhʾ
ṭbʾ mṣbʾ dy
ʿynʾ ʿbd bny
mytʾ qšṭʾ

Iarhịbol, the good god, sacred stone of the source, made by the Bene Mita, the archers.

l. 2: ***mṣb***, ‘sacred stone’. *InvD* translates ‘betyl’, i.e. an aniconic, sacred stone, whereas *TEAD* renders the word as ‘stele’, the usual English translation of betyl.[139] In the present context I prefer the more general translation ‘sacred stone’. In ancient Israel as well as in Nabatea and Arabia the word ***mṣb*** frequently designates an *aniconic* sacred stone.[140] However, it is questionable whether the word has the same meaning in Palmyra.[141] In Palmyra ***mṣb*** invariably refers to a figural relief, to the divine figure depicted on a relief, or a cult statue.[142] In this sense the word is also used in Dura, on the dedicatory inscription of the relief of Zeus Kyrios-Baalshamin (above, no. 5). Moreover, the relief under discussion represents the god of the source in figural form, and not in the shape of a betyl. Hence ***mṣb*** designates a figural representation made of stone with cultic significance.

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[138] Already suggested in *TEAD* VII-VIII, 257, note 31. Cf. the reconstruction of the genealogy of this family by M. Gawlikowski, “Reliefs du temple des Gaddê”, 109; idem, “Princes de Palmyre”, 260.

[139] J. Patrich, *The Formation of Nabatean Art. Prohibition of Graven Image among the Nabateans* (Jerusalem 1990).

[140] J. Starcky, *DBSup* VII (1964), 1008-1114; S. Ribichini, “Baetyl”, *DDD,* cols. 299-304; Patrich, *Formation of Nabatean Art*, 167-172; E. D. Stockton, *Arabian Cult Stones* (diss. Sydney 1982), 100-112.

[141] Contra R. du Mesnil du Buisson,“Les origines du panthéon palmyrénien“, *MUSJ* 39 (1964), 169-181, who advocates that Iarḥibol was worshipped in the form of a baetyl at the source.

[142] Above, note 49.

l. 3: *mṣb dy ʿynʾ*, the 'sacred stone of the source' is attested in two Palmyrene inscriptions referring to 'a priest of the sacred stone of the source'.[143] It may be inferred from these inscriptions that 'the source' refers to the Efqa. The relief from Dura-Europos provides the sole instance that identifies this deity as Iarḫibol. Thus 'sacred stone of the source' is a cultic formula, designating the manifestation of Iarḫibol worshipped at the source, which came to be used independently.

l. 3: *bny mytʾ*, the Bene Mita are a well known Palmyrene clan, in all probability one of the four 'tribes' within the city.[144] The tribe is first mentioned in an inscription from the year 11 CE.[145] This inscription pictures two members of the Bene Mita as collectors of taxes levied on camels. From this it may be inferred that its members were already active in the administration of Palmyra before the Roman involvement. The importance of the Bene Mita in the first half of the first century CE is apparent from their marriages with members of other prominent clans.[146] It is noteworthy that these marriages were concluded at the time that the four 'tribes' were installed in Palmyra. Between 50 and 70 CE a member of the Bene Mita, Ḫairan the son of Bonna, played an important role in political reforms in Palmyra.[147] In view of the eminent position of some of its members, the Bene Mita may very well have been one of the four 'tribes' that formed the political body of Palmyra from the end of the first century CE onwards.[148] Possibly the Bene Mita were in charge of the temple of Atargatis, one of the sanctuaries of the four 'tribes'.[149]

Arguing that Palmyrene 'tribes' had disappeared by the middle of the second century CE, Brown assumes that the relief ought to be dated before the Roman occupation of Dura in 165 CE.[150] However, the four 'tribes' are still mentioned in inscriptions from a later period.[151] Hence the tribal terminology in the present inscription does not favour a date before 165 CE.

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[143] *PAT* nos. 0410 and 0411 (both not dated): *ʾpklʾ dy mṣb ʿynʾ*.

[144] Inscriptions that mention the Bene Mita are listed by Gawlikowski, *Temple*, 37-38. To this list can be added the inscription recently published by Gawlikowski and Asʿad, cited in the following note.

[145] K. Asʿad and M. Gawlikowski, "Le péage à Palmyre en 11 CE", *Semitica* 41-42 (1991-92), 163-172 (not incorporated in *PAT*).

[146] *PAT* nos. 2901 (52 CE); 0168 (52 CE). These are the only marriages between members belonging to different clans attested in Palmyrene inscriptions.

[147] Dijkstra, *Life and Loyalty*, 96-97.

[148] Chapter I, 24-25.

[149] *PAT* no. 0273 (140 CE). Cf. Chapter II, note 43.

[150] *TEAD* VII-VIII, 265.

l. 4: *qšt*, 'archer'.[152] Palmyrene bowmen are attested in the Mithraeum of Dura-Europos in 168 CE and 170-71 CE respectively (below, nos. 27 and 29). These Palmyrene archers probably belonged to the Roman garrison, although they do not seem to have been an official unit of the Roman army. They were replaced by the Cohors XX Palmyrenorum. This regiment is first attested in Dura in 208 CE, and probably dates back to 192 CE.[153] Consequently, the present relief is in all likelihood to be dated between 165 and 194 CE. This is supported by its style.[154]

17. Pl. VII. *PAT no. 1100*

Inscription on the base of a small statue representing Nabû (below, 254). YUAG 1938. 5304. Published: *InvD*, 18, no. 34; *TEAD* VII-VIII, 281, no. 910, pl. XXXVI, 1; Milik, *Dédicaces*, 163; Teixidor, *Pantheon*, 109.

nbw ᶜbd zbdʾ
br zb(d)lʾ

Nabû. Zabda, the son of Zab[di]la has made (it)

l. 1: ***nbw***, Nabû, a god of Babylonian origin, who was an important deity in Palmyra.[155]

zbdʾ, Zabda, hypocoristicon of some name composed with Aramaic *zbd*, 'to give'. The present inscription provides the only instance of this name in Palmyrene inscriptions from Dura-Europos. The Greek transcription Ζάβδας, however, is attested several times.[156] Most instances date from the Roman period. The name is popular among Palmyrenes, especially among those serving in the Cohors XX Palmyrenorum, but is likewise attested with people of local Aramaic stock.[157] In Palmyra *zbdʾ* is common, as well as the variants *zbd* and *zbdy*.[158] Parallels are likewise known from Nabatean, Hatrene and Safaitic onomastics.[159] In Greek the name is widely attested throughout Syria.[160]

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[151] The Bene Komare in 182 in 198 CE (Ingholt, "Inscriptions and Sculptures from Palmyra", 109; idem, "Deux inscriptions bilingues de Palmyre", 278-289). The Bene Mattabol in 159 and 166 CE (*PAT* nos. 1154 and 0543). Honorary inscriptions from the great colonnade testify to the existence of the Bene Mattabol as late as 279-280 CE. Interestingly, this 'tribe' was still connected with its traditional sanctuary, the temple of Arṣu: K. Asᶜad-and M. Gawlikowski, "New Honorific Inscriptions in the Great Colonnade of Palmyra", *AAAS* 36 (1986), 164-171 (inscriptions nos. 7 and 8 are dated to 279-280 CE).

[152] For the interchange of t and ṭ see Cantineau, *Grammaire*, 39.

[153] Chapter I, 14.

[154] Below, 253.

[155] Chapter V, esp. 131-135.

[156] Cumont, *Fouilles*, 388-390, no. 27 (graffito from the temple of the Palmyrene gods; third century CE); *TEAD* IV, 171-172, nos. 343 and 344 (Temple of Artemis, Ζωίλος Ζάβδου, βουλευτής; third century CE); Potsherd found in tower 19: *InvD*, 19. Once we encounter the variant Ζάβδουις: *TEAD* V, 157, no. 475 (temple of Azzanathkona, room W 14, cf. below, 315-

l. 2: *zb(d)lʾ*, Zabdila, a name of Aramaic origin, meaning 'gift of god'. The *daleth* was probably dropped by accident; whereas *zblʾ* is not attested in Palmyra and is difficult to explain, *zbdlʾ* is a common Palmyrene name.[161] In Greek the name is transcribed Ζαβδίλα.[162] This name is not attested in Dura-Europos. Hence Zabda's patronym favours his Palmyrene origin.

18-22. *PAT nos. 1105-1109* (collated readings)

Five graffiti were found on the first layer of plaster of the *pronaos* that was consecrated around 159 CE. The texts are heavily damaged, due to the preparation for the second layer of plaster. They are to be dated between the consecration of the temple and the preparation of the second layer of plaster, i.e. between 159 CE and the beginning of the third century CE.[163] All four were published by Du Mesnil du Buisson, *InvD*, 20-26, nos. 39-43. Despite the fact that these readings and translations are highly suspect, they are copied by *PAT* without further comments. The present whereabouts of these graffiti is unknown. The following collated readings are based upon Du Mesnil du Buisson's tracings.

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316). All instances cited above are dated to the Roman period. One instance testifies to the local use of this name in the Parthian period. A certain Ζαβδουᾶς is mentioned in *TEAD PP*, no. 19, from 86-87 CE. The name is an alias of Nikanor, the son of Polemocrates. The other Aramaic alias is Nabousamos, a name not attested in Palmyra and hence in all probability a local Aramaic name (cf. *TEAD* V, no. 418).

[157] The popularity of this name among the Palmyrene military is apparent from the Roman military papyri from Dura. The Latin transcription of the name, 'Zabdas' or 'Zabdes', is especially frequent in the rosters of the Cohors XX Palmyrenorum: *TEAD PP*, index, 439.

[158] Stark, *Personal Names*, 16.

[159] Discussion and parallels: E. Littmann, *Safaitic Inscriptions* (Leiden 1943), 312b; G. Ryckmans, *Les noms propres sud-sémitiques*, vol. 1 (Louvain 1934), 83; Abbadi, *Personennamen*, 103; Harding, *Pre-Islamic Arabian Names*, 294.

[160] Sartre, *Bosra*, 202. Cf. also *IGLS* V, no. 2703 (150-158 CE) from Nazala.

[161] *TEAD* VII-VIII, 281. Stark, *Personal Names*, 17 and 85-86

[162] Wuthnow, *Semitischen Menschennamen*, 48.

[163] The second layer of plaster was painted. For a discussion of various of these fragments, compare below, 259-260.

18. *PAT 1105* (collated reading)

Graffito on the first layer of plaster of the south wall of the *pronaos*. Three lines, written vertically. Published: *InvD*, 20-22, no. 39.

dkyr ᶜzyz br ḥb[-]
[. . .] bb[ʾ] wbṭb
[.]hdy nṭr[y] n ʾp [- - -]
[. . . . . .]

May Aziz, the son of Ḥabb[a] [and . . . . .] be remembered. And for good the chief of the guards (?)

Du Mesnil du Buisson reads: 'May Aziz, the guardian of the gate be remembered. And for good, the chief of those who are guarding before the gate.' This reading is very unlikely;

l. 1*:* *ᶜzyz*, Aziz, Arabic *ᶜazîz*, Aramaic *ᶜazzîz*, meaning 'mighty, powerful'.[164] The name is attested in Palmyra.[165] More frequent in Palmyrene onomastics is the name *ᶜzyzw*, the Arabic adjective of *ᶜazîz*, and the name of the deity Azizu, used as a personal name.[166] Possibly Aziz is a shortened form of this name. The Latin transcription 'Azizus' is known from the military parchments and papyri.[167]

br ḥb[-]; Du Mesnil du Buisson reads ***brḥ***, 'guard'. It is clear from the tracing, however, that there was at least one more letter, in all probability a ***beth***. We may therefore read ***br ḥb [-]***, which may be restored as ***ḥbʾ***, ***ḥby*** or ***ḥbn***, personal names that are all attested in Palmyra.[168]

l. 2: ***bbʾ***, Baba, 'little child', is in all likelihood a personal name. In Palmyrene inscriptions from Dura-Europos this name is attested in a graffito from the temple of the Palmyrene gods, and in an inscription on a relief found at the Palmyrene gate (below, nos. 51; 62). The Greek transcription Bᾶβας is frequently attested in Dura, especially among soldiers (cf. the variants

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[164] Stark, *Personal Names*, 105.
[165] Stark, *Personal Names*, 44.
[166] Stark, *Personal Names*, 44.
[167] *TEAD PP*, index, 430.
[168] Stark, *Personal Names*, 19 and 87.

Βαβοῦις, Βαβοῦιος, Latin Babuis).[169] The name is not attested in Palmyra, but variants are attested in Hatra and elsewhere in the Semitic world.[170]

l. 3 ***nṭr[y] n*** ; peʿal. part. act. pl. m.abs. of ***nṭr***.[171] Highly uncertain reading (cf. Milik, ***Biblica*** 48, 564, n. 3).

The final word is read by Du Mesnil du Buisson ***bbʾ***, 'gate'. This reading is not substantiated by the tracing. The word probably begins with a ***gamal.***

l. 4: Although no longer readable, there was definitely another line. Du Mesnil du Buisson discounts this line in his translation

19. *PAT no. 1106* (collated reading)

Graffito below and a little to the right of the previous one. Published: *InvD,* 22-24, no. 40.

1 ʿl ʿbdy m [- - - -]
2 ʿl n[-]ry mlkʾ m.[- -]5
3 ʿl [- -]ʾ 5 m
4 ʿl bl⸢ḥʾ⸣ [- - -]brr m. [- - - - - -]
5 ʿl kmry m. [- - -]
6 ʿl[- - - - - -]

For Abdai m. [. . . .]
For N[u]rai, Malka m. [. . .]
For [ ] m. 5
For Bolhạ [. . .]BRR m. [- - - -]
For the priests m. [- -]
For [. . . . .]

l. 1: *ʿl* This expression is frequently found in inscriptions listing contributions of people to a temple or thiasos. In all probability, therefore, we are dealing with a list of personal names, recording contributions to the temple.

ʿbdy, Abdai, 'servant', derives from the common Semitic (except Akkadian) root *ʿbd,* and is common in Palmyrene onomastics.[172] The name and its variants are common throughout Syria and Mesopotamia.[173] Du Mesnil du

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[169] Milik, *Dédicaces*, 328.

[170] Abbadi, *Personennamen*, 86, *bby*, for diffusion and parallels.

[171] *DNWSI*, 755.

[172] Stark, *Personal Names*, 41-42, and 102.

[173] Abbadi, *Personennamen*, 139, for parallels and diffusion.

Buisson considers it to be a substantive, and translates ‘servant’.[174] In view of the preceding *ᶜl*, a personal name is more plausible.

The letter *mim* is probably to be interpreted as a weight; perhaps mina.

l. 2: *n[w]ry*, Nurai, or *n[p]ry*, Naprai (?). The two readings are equally possible. Both personal names are attested in Palmyra.[175] Du Mesnil du Buisson restores *n[ṭ]ry*, ‘guards’, a word attested once in a Palmyrene inscription.[176] *mlkʾ*, Malka, probably a shortened form of some name incorporating *mlk*, ‘king’, that is attested several times in Palmyra, and is common throughout Syria in Semitic as well as in Greek writing.[177] The variant *mlkw* is attested several times in Palmyrene inscriptions in Dura-Europos. The Greek transcriptions Μάλιχος, Μάλικος, Μάλχος, and Latin Malchus are likewise common in Dura (above, no. 1). Du Mesnil du Buisson considers it to be a substantive, and translates ‘king’, i.e. ‘guards of the king’. According to Du Mesnil du Buisson we are dealing with a Palmyrene king. However, Palmyra did not have a king in the second century CE, the time this graffito was made. Consequently this can only refer to the king of the Parthians. However, Palmyra was controlled by Rome from the beginning of the Common Era onwards, and it is highly improbable that its inhabitants served as guards of a Parthian ruler. In all probability therefore, both *nwry* and *mlkʾ* are personal names.

l. 3: *ᶜl [..]*. Du Mesnil du Buisson reads *rnnyʾ*, ‘singers or announcers’, which would provide the sole instance of this word in Palmyrene inscriptions. This reading is highly improbable.[178] Like the other lines, the first two letters are probably to be read *ᶜl*. Then we probably have to reconstruct a personal name, but unfortunately the first two letters are obscure.

l. 4: *blḥʾ*, Belḥa or Bolḥa. Du Mesnil du Buisson reads *blʾm*, Balʾam, a Jewish name, which is not attested in Palmyra or Dura. As far as can be told from the tracing, the reading *blḥʾ* is equally possible. This Palmyrene name also occurs in a graffito from the temple which preceded the temple of the Gaddê (above, no. 10).

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[174] Followed by *DNWSI*, “ᶜbd”, 817.

[175] Stark, *Personal Names*, 39-40, and 99-100.

[176] *PAT* no. 1358 (272 CE): *bt nṭrʾ*, ‘house of the guards’. Cf. Milik, *Dédicaces*, 277; Gawlikowski, *Temple*, 76; F. Rosenthal, *Die Sprache der palmyrenischen Inschriften und ihre Stellung innerhalb des Aramaïschen* (MVAG 41. 1; Leipzig 1936), 76. The graffito from Dura is not mentioned in *DNWSI* (cf. *nṣr*).

[177] Stark, *Personal Names*, 32 and 95. Cf. Sartre, *Bosra*, 214.

[178] “rnn”, *DNWSI*, 1078.

20. *PAT 1107*

Graffito on the west wall. Published: *InvD*, 24-25, no. 41.

[dky]r
rb m⸢r⸣w[nʾ]
zbd[bw]l

May Rab Maro[na], (the són of) Zabdi[bo]l be remembered

l. 1: ***rb,*** Rab. In Palmyrene onomastics we encounter the names ***rbʾ*** and ***rbw***, shortened forms of the name ***rbʾl***, 'great is god'. Hence ***rb*** is probably a hypocoristicon or misspelling of this name. ***rbʾ*** can also mean 'lord, master or elder', and this sense is preferred by Du Mesnil du Buisson. In view of the context of the present inscription, however, a personal name is more likely. ***mrw[nʾ],*** Marona, 'lord', is attested in Palmyrene onomastics.[179] The name also occurs in a Syriac inscription from Edessa.[180] The Greek transcription of this name, Μαρόνας, is not attested in Dura-Europos.[181] Variants of the name (for example Μαρίων) are especially frequent in northern Syria.[182]

l. 2 *zbd[bw]l,* Zabdibol, 'gift of Bol'. The same name occurs in another graffito from the temple of the Gaddê (below, no. 22). In Dura the name is first attested in the dedicatory inscription of the temple in the necropolis (above, no. 1). The name is common in Palmyrene onomastics.

21. *PAT no. 1108* (collated reading)

Graffito on the west wall. Published: *InvD*, 25, no. 42.

[dky]r yhy[. .]
br b.........
b[r] g......n
hn b.........
- - - - - - -
[. .]lh bṭb

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[179] Stark, *Personal Names*, 37 and 97. For names with the same root compare Ryckmans, *Noms propres sud-sémitiques*, vol. 1, 32.

[180] Drijvers and Healy, *Old Syriac Inscriptions*, 208, Cs3.

[181] Wuthnow, *Semitischen Menschennamen*, 73.

[182] Sartre, *Bosra*, 215.

May Iahi[ba], the son of B..., the s[on] of G[...] be remembered, [- -- -] [. . .] in good.

l. 1: We may perhaps restore *yhy[bʾ],* Iahiba, a personal name derived from Aramaic pass. part. *yhb*, 'given'. In Dura the name is attested in Palmyrene as the name of the father of the painter of the 'house of the banquet' (below, no. 32). The Greek transcription Eiaeibas is known from the larger Mithraic relief dated 170-171 CE (below, no. 29). The name is attested in Palmyra, occurs frequently in Hatra, and was the name of an Edessene bishop.[183]

22. *PAT no. 1109* (collated reading)

Graffito on the west wall, to the left and below the previous two. This graffito is barely legible and the transcription is bound to remain tentative. Published: *InvD,* 25-26, no. 43.

dkyr ⸢bryk⸣
zb[d]bwl

May Zabdibol be remembered and blessed.

l. 1: *bryk,* Du Mesnil du Buisson reads *brkh,* a personal name not attested in Palmyra. The formula *dkyr bryk* is common.[184] In Dura a Palmyrene dipinto from the 'house of the banquet' (below, no. 32) begins with the same formula.

l. 2: *zbdbwl,* Zabdibol, 'gift of Bol', a well known Palmyrene name. The same name occurs in another graffito from the temple of the Gaddê (above, no. 20). The name is first attested in the dedicatory inscription of the temple in the necropolis (above, no. 1).

23. *TEAD VII-VIII, 275, no. 901*

Red dipinto on the die of the gypsum altar which stood before the aedicula of room 7.

Θεῷ ’Ιε
ράβλῳ
ἀνήγειρε[ν]

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[183] Stark, *Personal Names*, 25 and 91; Abbadi, *Personennamen*, 23 and 115 (*Yhybw*).

[184] For a discussion and parallels: J. Teixidor, "Deux inscriptions palmyréniennes du Musée de Bagdad", *Syria* 40 (1963), 34.

{ 7 lines, illegible]

For Iarḫibol. Erected......

Θεὸς ʼΙέραβλος, transcribes the name of the Palmyrene god Iarḫibol. The name of this indigenous god is spelled similarly in a Palmyrene inscription from Coptos (Egypt).[185]

A date is missing. However, the fact that the inscription is in Greek and mentions Iarḫibol as the divine recipient suggests a date in the Roman period. The military character of this inscription is supported by the Latin dedication by the Cohors XX Palmyrenorum found nearby (below, no. 24).

24. *TEAD VII-VIII, 277, no. 906*

Cut in the face of a monumental base, placed against the west wall of colonnade 10:

] MILI[
LIBERALI[TAT]E E{
COH(ORS) XX PA[L]MY[RENORUM SAG.

The Cohors XX Palmyrenorum is first attested in Dura in 208 CE.[186] In all likelihood, therefore, this inscription dates from the third century CE. The monumental base was undoubtedly intended for statues of some sort. The remains of the inscription give no indication as to the subject(s) of the dedication. Brown suggests that the statues were those of Septimius and his sons or of Caracalla and Geta. Unfortunately, however, there is nothing by means of which we can substantiate this hypothesis.

25 *TEAD VII-VIII, 276, no. 904*

Graffito on the socle of the niches of room 9, in the northern complex (below, 259).

Βαρνêος ʼΑχέου ψώμιν
Βουêος ψώμιν
Βουβêος Ξαμ (?) ψώμιν

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[185] *IGRR* I, no. 1169.
[186] *TEAD PP*, 26-46.

Βαργι(ννaῖος] ψώμιν

Barneos, the son of Acheos, (donated) food
Bou(b)eos (donated) food
Boubeos, the son of Sam(?), (donated) food
Bargi[nnaios] (donated) food

l. 1: Βαρνε̂ος, and the variants Βαρναῖος and Βαρνεῖος are common in Dura, and are an abbreviated form of the name Barnabû, 'son of Nabû'.[187] Most instances date from the Roman period, but several inscriptions dated in the Parthian period show that this was a local Aramaic name.[188] The Aramaic equivalent *brny,* 'son of Nabu', is attested in Palmyrene onomastics.[189] It is often found as Barnaeus among the Dura soldiers.[190]

ψωμίς 'piece of food', possibly cake. [191] According to Brown, the recording of contributions of food suggest that room 9 was a cult storeroom, which contained food used for sacred meals.[192]

'Αχε̂ος is a common Semitic name, attested in Dura in the forms 'Αχείας, 'Αχιείας and 'Αχεᾶς.[193] The Latin transcription Achaeus is attested several times in the military papyri from Dura.[194] Perhaps the name transcribes *ʾqyḥ*, a name attested in Palmyra. However, in Palmyra this name is transcribed in Greek 'Ακκέος.[195]

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[187] *YCS* 1955, 203.

[188] *TEAD* II, D. 41 (Palmyrene gate, Roman period); *TEAD* VI, 113, no. 639 (house in block C3, n.d., Roman period); idem, 130, no. 647 (idem); *YCS* 1955, 157, nos. 40 and 42 (graffiti from a shop in block B2, Roman period); idem, 181, no. 158 (potsherd, n.d.). Βαρνεῖος: *TEAD* V, 148, no. 460 (temple of Azzanathkona, Roman period); Βαρναῖος: Cumont, *Fouilles*, 442, no. 121 (temple of Artemis); idem, 446-447, no. 127 (odeon in the temple of Artemis, Roman period); *TEAD* II, D. 3 (Palmyrene gate, Roman period); *TEAD* IV, 76, no. 173 (graffito from tower 15); idem, 148 no. 288 (house of Nebuchelus, around the middle of the third century CE); *TEAD* V, 140, no. 450 (temple of Azzanathkona); idem, 146, no. 454 (temple of Azzanthkona, room W 7); idem, 199, no. 552 (step from the temple of Azzanathkona, 107-108 CE); *TEAD* VII-VIII, 168, no. 871 (inscription from the temple of Adonis, 153 CE); *YCS* 1955, 130-131, no. 2 (inscription from the temple of Atargatis, 37 CE); *TEAD PP*, no. 31 (the son of Lusias).

[189] Stark, *Personal Names*, 12 and 79.

[190] *TEAD PP*, index, 430.

[191] Liddell and Scott, 2029; Milik, *Dédicaces*, 200.

[192] *TEAD* VII-VIII, 254, note 21.

[193] Cumont, *Fouilles*, 361, no. 6a (*pronaos* of the temple of the Palmyrene gods); idem, 446, no. 127 (graffito in the odeon of the temple of Artemis, Roman period); *TEAD* IV, 178, no. 370 (?).

[194] *TEAD PP*, index, 426.

[195] Stark, *Personal Names*, 72.

l. 2: Βουε̂ος is not attested elsewhere, and is probably an error for Βουβε̂ος, attested in line 3 of this inscription as well as elsewhere in Dura.[196] Variants are Βουβαῖος,[197] Βουβέας,[198] Βουβάης.[199] The name probably derives from the name ’Αβαβοῦις (above, no. 5).[200]

l. 4: Βαργινναίος, ‘son of Ginai’, i.e. Gennai.[201] A Semitic name attested several times in Dura, not specifically Palmyrene.[202]

26. *TEAD VII-VIII, 276-277, no. 905*

Graffito on the socle of the niches of room 9, just below no. 25.

’Ακίβα Λυσανίου κριθήν
’Αβιδάθην κριθήν
’Ακίβα οὐετρανὸς κριθήν
Μιττολβαείσα Μην (?) κριθήν

Akiba, the son of Lusanois (donated) barley
Abidathe (donated) barley
Akiba, the veteran (donated) barley
Mittolbaeisa Men(?) (donated) barley

l. 1: ’Ακίβα The Semitic name *ʿqbʾ*, from *ʿqb*, ‘protected’. The variant ’Ακειβᾶς is attested several times at Dura, and is in all probability a local Aramaic name.[203] In view of its meaning it is hardly suprising that the name was popular among soldiers, the Latin spelling being *Acibas*.[204] Cf. ‘Akiba, the veteran', mentioned in line 3 of this graffito. *ᶜqbᵓ*, is attested in Hatra.[205] The variant *ᶜqby*, occurs in Palmyra.[206]

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[196] *YCS* 1955, 157-161, nos. 40, 41, 42, 44 and 48 (graffiti from a shop in block B2, Roman period).

[197] *TEAD* VII-VIII, 171, no. 875 (temple of Adonis, 181-82 CE).

[198] *TEAD* VII-VIII, 174, no. 879 (graffito from the temple of Adonis, n.d.)

[199] *TEAD PP*, no. 47.

[200] Milik, *Dédicaces*, 328.

[201] *TEAD* II, 133.

[202] *TEAD* II, 133, D. 81 (graffito from the Palmyrene gate); *TEAD* VI, 251, no. 748 (sherd found in Wall Street, 252-53 CE = *YCS* 1955, no. 191); idem, 298, no. 793 (name accompanying a painted portrait from the ‘house of the Roman scribes’); idem, 293, no. 784, from the same locality, has the variant Βαργινναίχος.

[203] *YCS* 1955, 129-131, no. 2 (inscription from the temple of Atargatis, 37 CE); idem, 171, no. 91 (dipinto on potsherd, third century CE).

[204] *YCS* 1955, 131; *TEAD PP*, index, 426.

Λυσανίας is a Greek name, of old attested in Dura.

κριθή ; 'barley'. According to Milik, 'bread made of barley'.[207] In all likelihood this inscription lists the contributions to meals celebrated in the temple.

l. 2:'Αβιδάθην is the Greek transcription of the Aramaic name ***ᶜbdᶜth*** or ***ᶜbdᶜtᵓ***, 'servant of Ateh', Names composed with *ᶜbd* are common in Dura, but this inscription provides the only instance of the name Abidathen in Dura-Europos. The name is common in Palmyra.[208]

l. 4: Μιττολβαείσα Μην (?) The Parthian commander of the village Paliga mentioned in DP no. 20 from the year 121 CE, is called Μητολβαίσσα Μην... τοῦ Μηναριαίου. The name is definitely not Iranian, as the editors suggest. The enigmatic Μην element following both names suggests an Anatolian origin.[209]

SCULPTURE

Pl. III. *Relief representing the Gad of Dura*

Relief cut from a rectangular slab of Palmyrene limestone, H. 0. 47 m, W. 0. 62 m. YUAG 1938. 5314. Published: *TEAD* VII-VIII, 258-260, pl. XXXIII; Rostovtzeff, "Dura and the Problem of Parthian Art", *YCS* 5 (1935), 233, fig. 48; *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, no. 4, 14-17, pl. 4; Matheson, *An Obsession with Fortune*, cat. 34, fig. 11.

The relief was found on the floor of *naos* 1. Its width tallies with the breadth of the two outer niches at the back of this room.[210] It may therefore be safely concluded that it was originally placed in one of these niches and functioned as a cult relief. The inscriptions on the plinth and the dipinti on the top border identify the central figure as the Gad of Dura, the figure on the right as Seleukos Nikator, and the figure on the left as Ḥairan, the son of Maliku, the individual who dedicated the relief in 159 CE (above, nos. 12-13).

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[205] Abbadi, *Personennamen*, 44.

[206] Stark, *Personal Names*, 107.

[207] Milik, *Dédicaces*, 200.

[208] Stark, *Personal Names*, 103.

[209] *TEAD PP*, 111.

[210] *TEAD* VII-VIII, 244. The breadth of the niches is 0. 86 m.

A bearded male figure, identified by the accompanying inscription as the Gad of Dura, is represented on the central portion of the relief. The god is depicted frontally and sits on a throne flanked by eagles.[211] His left hand -now missing- probably held the sceptre that is placed between his legs. His right hand is directed towards an altar which stands to his right. The object in his right hand is missing, but the remaining traces suggest that it held a bunch of wheat. The Gad has a moustache, a short curly beard and thick, short curly hair. A diadem surrounds his head. He is clad in a *himation* and a long-sleeved tunic with a jewelled neck band. He is wearing plain shoes. Apart from the wheat ears, the iconography of the Gad of Dura reminds one of the iconography of Zeus Olympios. The Gad is in all likelihood to be identified as Zeus Megistos, the tutelary deity of one of the most important temples in Dura-Europos.[212]

A beardless youth wearing military costume, identified by the inscription as Seleukos Nikator, is depicted on the right-hand side of the relief. He stands frontally, but his head is slightly turned towards the god. With his right arm he reaches out to hold a garland over the head of the Gad. He leans on a lance or sceptre that he holds in his left hand. Seleukos' short curly hair is bound with a diadem, and he wears large round earrings. He is clad in a Hellenistic military corselet with one row of fringed flaps at each shoulder and two at the lower border. Underneath the corselet he wears a long-sleeved, knee-length tunic. A *chlamys*, fastened on his right shoulder with a round brooch, is thrown back over his left shoulder. A sword dangles from his left side. He is wearing low boots.

A fragmentary priestly figure, identified by the inscription as Ḥairan, the son of Maliku Naṣor, is depicted on the left-hand side of the relief. Ḥairan's head is essentially depicted frontally, but his body is slightly turned towards the god.[213] With his right arm he reaches across his body, presumably to place incense on the altar that stands between him and the deity. He holds a palm branch in his left hand. Ḥairan is clean shaven and wears a short-sleeved tunic, an ample *himation*, and sandals. He is recognisable as a priest by his modius headdress, the hat typical of Palmyrene priests.[214] This modius is bound with a wreath, in the centre of which is a rosette, an ornament that frequently embellishes the Palmyrene priestly bonnet.[215]

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[211] The heads of the figures on the reliefs representing the Gad of Palmyra and the Gad of Dura are all depicted on the same level. The deities are seated and the accompanying figures are standing. This implies that the gods are larger than human size; cf. *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 14. However, I doubt whether it was the intention of the artist to depict the deities on a larger scale than the other figures. It is more logical to assume that this is due to the law of isocephaly, which is typical of reliefs from Palmyra and Dura-Europos (cf. also below, note 225).

[212] Cf. the discussion of the identity of the Gad of Dura, above, Chapter IV, 113

[213] The head of this figure was preserved when the relief was found, but is now missing.

The figural relief is framed by a leaf border, typical of small Palmyrene sculptures from the second century CE. Its Palmyrene origin is confirmed by the Palmyrene stone and the style of the relief.[216] It may therefore safely be concluded that the monument was fabricated by a Palmyrene craftsman, in all probability in a workshop in Palmyra.

Pl. IV. *Relief representing Gad Tadmor*
Relief cut from a rectangular slab of Palmyrene limestone, H. 0. 47 m., W. 0. 57 m. YUAG 1938. 5313. Published: *TEAD* VII-VIII, 260-62, 275, pl. XXXIV; Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra*, pl. XX; *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, no. 5, 17-19, pl. 5; Matheson, *An Obsession with Fortune*, cat. 33, fig. 12.

The relief was found on the floor of *naos* 1. Like the previous relief, it was intended for one of the small niches at the back of the sanctuary unit. The Palmyrene inscription on the plinth identifies the central figure as Gad Tadmor, the black dipinto on the border identifies the figure on the left-hand side as Ḥairan, the dedicant of the relief (above, nos. 14-15). The left part of the plinth is missing, but an inscription may be presumed here. The relief is framed by a leaf border, identical to the border of the relief representing the Gad of Dura.

A female figure, identified by the inscription as Gad Tadmor, is depicted in the centre of the relief. The goddess is seated on a stylized rock. Her body and head are turned slightly to the right. Her left hand rests on the back of the small lion standing to her left. The head of this animal is crowned with a tiny crescent. Her upturned right hand rests on her right knee and originally held a bunch of flowers. Her right foot is placed on the shoulder of a small naked female, shown from the breast upwards, as if rising from the water. The woman stretches her left arm in a swimming motion; with her right hand she supports her right breast. The Gad is clad in a chiton and a *himation*. The *himation* covers the back of her head, on which she wears a mural crown. From her hair, which is drawn back and parted in the centre, dangles a jewel in the form of a double lozenge. The goddess wears a necklace and earrings. A bracelet adorns her right wrist. The iconography of the Gad of Tadmor is inspired by the famous Hellenistic statue of the Tyche of Antioch. The lion reminds one of the iconography of the goddess Atargatis. In all likelihood she is to be identified as Astarte-Gad Tadmor, the goddess who received a cult in the temple of Bel at Palmyra.[217]

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[214] H. Seyrig, "Inscriptions grecques de l'agora de Palmyre", *Syria* 22 (1941), 267-270; R. Stucky, "Prêtres syriens I. Palmyre", *Syria* 50 (1973), 176.

[215] Seyrig, "Inscripions grecques", 269, note 2. According to Du Mesnil du Buisson, *TMP*, 473, the wreath indicates the apotheosis of the deceased priest. This is most unlikely, since we know of funerary busts of men wearing a plain priestly headdress (see for example Stucky, "Prêtres syriens I", fig. 8).

[216] *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 253-255.

On the right-hand side of the relief a wingless Nike is represented. She stands frontally with her left leg slightly advanced. In her left hand she holds a palm branch; with her right arm she reaches out to hold a garland over the head of the Gad of Palmyra. The Nike wears a Doric peplos girdled below her breasts, which is fastened on both shoulders with round brooches. The form of her body is clearly visible beneath the cloth. Her hair is drawn back and parted in the middle; from the parting dangles a jewel.

On the left-hand side of the relief stands a priestly figure. Although the inscription below this part of the relief is now missing, he can be identified as Ḥairan, the dedicant of the relief; his facial traits and costume are identical to those of the priest Ḥairan depicted on the relief depicting the Gad of Dura. Ḥairan stands frontally. His right hand-now missing- probably reached out for the round incense box that he holds in his left hand. From this hand dangles a small cruse of oil. The portion between Ḥairan and Gad Tadmor is missing.

The material, dimensions, leaf border, composition and subject matter of this relief resemble the relief representing the Gad of Dura. The style of both reliefs is very similar as well, although the workmanship of the relief representing the Gad of Palmyra is somewhat superior. They were in all probability made by different sculptors in the same workshop in Palmyra.[218] Obviously, the two reliefs formed a pair.

Pl. V. *Relief fragments, Malakbel*

Nine non-joining fragments made of Palmyrene limestone. YUAG 1938. 5373. Published: *TEAD* VII-VIII, 262-64, pl. XXXV, 1 For the individual dimensions of the fragments: *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 19-22 , no. 6, pl. 6.

Scattered on the floor of *naos* 1 were found nine relief fragments. They are made of the same Palmyrene limestone as the reliefs representing the Gad of Tadmor and of Dura. Their Palmyrene origin is confirmed by the letter ***beth*** that is inscribed on one of the pieces. Three fragments are part of two Corinthian capitals. A fourth fragment depicts the modius of a Palmyrene priest. The headdress is garlanded and the wreath is adorned with a medallion containing the bust of a bareheaded and beardless man. It may be inferred from the dimension of this fragment that the figure of the priest was about 0. 32 m. high; i.e. about the same size as the priests on the other two reliefs. The same holds true for the fragment that represents the left eye, cheek and a portion of the hair of a beardless young figure. His curly hair is bound by a garland made of leaves. Two fragments depict the heads of eagle griffins. Both are represented in profile and look to the left. It follows from the proportions of these heads that the animals were about 0. 39 m. high, i.e. slightly taller than the other figures.[219]

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[217] Cf. the discussion of the identity of the Gad of Tadmor, above, Chapter IV, 105-107.

[218] Perkins, *Art of Dura-Europos*, 84.

The Palmyrene material and style of the fragments, combined with the fact that the pieces were found in a temple built by Palmyrenes, justifies a reconstruction of the scene by means of a comparison with other Palmyrene monuments. The two griffins are depicted in profile facing in the same direction. This suggests they drew a chariot. In the religious iconography of Palmyra the god Malakbel is represented in a wagon drawn by griffins. The motif is known from an altar from the first century CE that was found in the temple of Baalshamin in Palmyra (pl. XXII).[220] A very similar scene is represented on the famous Palmyrene altar from Rome (pl. XXI).[221] The altars from Rome and Palmyra both picture Malakbel as a young, curly-haired deity. These features accord well with the youth depicted on the Durene fragment. The extraordinary nature of this youth is substantiated by the wreath which adorns his head. In the iconography of Palmyra this attribute is never worn by living human beings, and is confined to deities or deceased people. It seems almost certain, therefore, that the youth has to identified as Malakbel.[222] Hence the relief depicted the god

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[219] The proportions of the griffins must have been about 0. 39 x 0. 39 m.. This reconstruction is based on other Palmyrene representations of griffins.

[220] Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra*, pl. XLIV. In addition two tesserae from Palmyra depict a figure seated in a quadriga drawn by four griffins. On the reverse side is depicted the bust of a radiant deity, clad in a military costume. Unfortunately these figures are not identified: *RTP* nos. 268-269.

[221] According to the accompanying Palmyrene inscription the altar is dedicated to 'Malakbel and the gods of Palmyra'. Cf. above, Chapter VI, 177.

[222] Thus Du Mesnil du Buisson, *TMP*, 324, and idem, *BiOr* 1972, 202. Brown, *TEAD* VII-VIII, 263, and *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 23, reject the identification of the youth as Malakbel. Starting from Brown's reconstruction of the dimensions of the relief, they assume that the relief pictured a third figure, larger than human scale. However, Brown's reconstruction is to be rejected (below, 250-252) and consequently there is no reason to presuppose a third person. On the contrary, as far as can be told from the remaining fragments, the composition of the Durene relief

Malakbel in a chariot drawn by griffins and a Palmyrene priest, who probably was the dedicant of the relief.

According to Frank Brown, the nine fragments are remnants of the central cult relief which adorned the back of *naos* 1, flanked by the two Gaddê reliefs. Consequently, Brown assumes that Malakbel was the tutelary deity of the temple of the Gaddê, a hypothesis that has been generally accepted.[223] Brown advances two arguments in order to substantiate his hypothesis. Firstly, he maintains that the original dimensions of the relief tally with the size of the central cult niche, and secondly he argues that the material, style and technique of the fragments are the same as the Gaddê reliefs. I think neither of these arguments is admissible as evidence.

Brown substantiates the central position of this relief by means of his reconstruction of its original dimensions, which supposedly agree with the dimensions of the central niche. Brown deduces the proportions of the relief from the size of the two Corinthian capitals. Assuming that these are the remains of an aedicula that framed the relief, he conjectures that the relief originally was about 1. 20 m. wide and 2. 44 m. high, proportions which agree with the dimension of the central cult niche.[224] However, the scale of the remaining figures is far too small for a relief of the dimensions proposed by Brown. Both the priest and the youth were originally about 0. 32 m. high. The griffins were slightly taller, about 0. 39 m. In order to cover the surface of a relief with a height of 2. 44 m., we have to reconstruct a third individual, about six times the size of the two others. This results in a composition that is inconceivable for a Palmyrene relief. Figures on Palmyrene reliefs are generally of the same height and their heads are depicted on approximately the same level.[225] In all likelihood, therefore, the fragments are part of a relief that was about the same size as the Gaddê reliefs.

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strongly resembles the scene on the altar from the sanctuary of Baalshamin (above, note 220). Before the publication of the excavation report, I. M. Rostovtzeff, "Deux notes sur des trouvailles à Doura-Europos", *CRAI* 1935, 298, proposed to identify the god as Aphlad. This possibility was rightly rejected by Brown, *TEAD* VII-VIII, 264, note 8.

[223] Frank Brown, *TEAD* VII-VIII, 262-263. Brown is followed by *TMP*, 270; Gawlikowski, "Reliefs du temple des Gaddê", 107; Perkins, *Art of Dura-Europos*, 72; *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 21; Equini-Schneider, "Il santuario di Bel", 81. M. A. R. Colledge, *The Art of Palmyra* (London 1976), 227, is more cautious. The article by Du Mesnil du Buisson (below, note 227) is the only (printed) exception to this rule.

[224] Brown, *TEAD* VII-VIII, 263-263. His reconstruction is accepted in *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 21.

[225] The so-called law of isocephaly. The two reliefs of the Gaddê provide an excellent example of this device (cf. above, note 211). There are several exceptions to this rule, for example the so-called relief of the 'goddess with the dog' (Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra*, pl. LI), and the relief representing Allat and a dedicant from Khirbet el Sane (Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra*, pl.

Although the dimensions of the central niche suggest that the central relief was bigger than the other two, this is not a decisive argument against the ascription of the fragments to the reliefs of the Gaddê; after all, it is not impossible that three reliefs of the same size embellished the back of the *naos*.[226] It does, however, imply that any of these three reliefs may have occupied the central niche.[227] It is therefore not certain that the fragments have to be restored as the central relief.

In case the two Gaddê reliefs and the remaining fragments did constitute a triptych, it is more probable to suppose that it was framed by the same leaf-border as the other two, and not by an aedicula.[228] This would imply that the Corinthian capitals and the other six fragments do not belong to the same relief.[229] If the capitals do belong to the remaining fragments, this suggests that the fragmentary relief and the two Gaddê reliefs do not belong together.

With the rejection of Brown's reconstruction of the central relief, the common origin and production of the three reliefs rests entirely upon the similarity in material, style and technique.[230] The two reliefs and the fragments are indeed made of the same Palmyrene limestone. This favours their Palmyrene origin, but does not imply that all three were made in the same workshop at the same time.

LVIII). However, the difference in scale between the figures on these reliefs is minimal and does not come near the reconstruction proposed by Brown. Other exceptions are to be found in the local sculpture of Dura-Europos. The relief that represents the god Aphlad pictures this deity standing on griffins, while the dedicant of the relief stands at ground level: *TEAD* V, 106-113, pl. XIII. Although the style of this relief displays Palmyrene influences, it is not Palmyrene: *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 236-242. Another example is provided by the cult relief from the temple of Azzanathkona (below, note 229).

[226] The breadth of the central cult niche at the back of the *naos* is 1. 28 m.; the breadth of the side niches is 0. 86 m. Consequently, the central niche was about 1.5 times the size of the two flanking niches. If we assume that the same proportions apply to the relief, we may reconstruct a central relief with a width of 0. 90 m., and a height of 0. 70 m. These dimensions scarcely match the proportions of the fragments.

[227] Thus Du Mesnil du Buisson, *BiOr* 1972, 202, fig. 1. For reasons of symmetry, this author supposes that the relief representing the Gad of Dura was placed in the centre, flanked to the left by the Gad of Palmyra, and to the right by the fragmentary relief, i.e. Malakbel. From a compositional view point this is indeed possible. However, I cannot agree with the interpretation of the composition and the main deities proposed by this author. Cf. the analysis of the two reliefs, above, Chapter IV.

[228] Du Mesnil du Buisson, *BiOr*. 1972, 202.

[229] A relief framed by an aedicula was found in the temple of Azzanathkona: *TEAD* V, 171-176, pl. XIV and XXIV. The style and composition of this relief display strong Graeco-Roman influence and deviate from other Durene sculptures: *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 252-252, with referemces to earlier literature. In view of the Greek influences, most authors date the relief in the first century CE. The architectural framework has been compared to classical Greek funerary stelae: Perkins, *Art of Dura-Europos*, 93. However, the same device is common on funerary stelae from Roman Syria. In view of the popularity of this motif in Roman art, and the Graeco-Roman style of the relief, I propose a date in the Roman period, i.e. after 165 CE.

[230] *TEAD* VII-VIII, 262; *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 253.

This assumption is based on Brown's stylistic analysis. However, the only fragment that allows for such a comparison, the head of the youthful figure, deviates in several respects from the figures represented on the other two reliefs. While the eyes of the figures on the Gaddê reliefs are quite small and deep set, the eye of the youth is big and almond shaped.[231] The hair of both the Gad of Dura and the youth is rendered in spiral curls, but in contrast to the Gad, the youth's curls are drilled in the centre.[232] Stylistic parallels for the youth can be found in Palmyrene sculptures, but not in the Gaddê reliefs.[233] Thus, although both the material and the style of the fragments point towards a Palmyrene origin, there is no sufficient proof for the assumption that this relief was fabricated with the Gaddê reliefs.

Not only is there no evidence from which it may be inferred that the three reliefs constituted a whole; an iconographic motif of one of the fragments strongly discredits this possibility. The fragment that depicts the modius of a Palmyrene priest deviates from the headdress that is worn by Ḥairan, the dedicant of the other two reliefs. While the headdress of Ḥairan is adorned with a rosette, the modius depicted by the fragment is embellished with a bust. Both adornments of the priestly modius are attested in Palmyra. Although the exact meaning of these symbols with respect to the organization of Palmyra's priesthood is not entirely clear, they are probably related to the hierarchy or the offices within the Palmyrene priesthood.[234] From this it may be inferred that the priest depicted by the fragment is not identical with the person who dedicated the reliefs of the Gaddê in 159 CE.[235]

We may conclude that it is not certain that the relief representing Malakbel is to be restored as central. Nor does it follow from the style of the fragments that it was contemporary with the two Gaddê reliefs.[236] The different headdress of the priest depicted on one of the fragments furthermore suggests that it did not belong to the other two. Hence the archaeological material provides no firm proof that Malakbel was the the tutelary deity of the temple of the Gaddê.

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[231] *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 21 and 254.

[232] *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 15, 21 and 254. This is not necessarily a stylistic difference but may reflect different phases in the production process. Similar procedures are known to have determined differences in early Christian sarcophagi: K. Eichner, "Die Produktionsmethoden der stadtrömischen Sarkophagfabrik in der Blütezeit unter Konstantin", *JbAC* 24 (1981), 85-113.

[233] Parallels are listed by *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 253- 254.

[234] Stucky, "Prêtres syriens I. Palmyre", 177-180. The bust is in all probability not confined to the cult of a particular deity, for it occurs on the headdress of priests of Baalshamin and Bel: H. Ingholt, "Palmyrene Sculptures in Beirut", *Berytus* 1 (1934), 35; Gawlikowski, "Reliefs du temple des Gaddê", 108; Stucky, "Prêtres syriens I. Palmyre", 179-180. Stucky distinguishes two types of busts: a beardless figure wearing a priestly modius and a bareheaded, bearded figure. The bust on the fragment fits neither of the two categories: the figure is beardless, but does not wear a modius.

[235] Gawlikowski, "Reliefs du temple des Gaddê", 108.

Pl. VI. *Relief representing Iarḫibol, the sacred stone of the source*
Relief cut of local gypsum, H. 0. 54 m., W. 0. 25 m. YUAG 1938. 5301. Published: *TEAD* VII-VIII, 264-265, pl. XXXV, 2; Drijvers, ***Religion of Palmyra***, pl. XXI; ***TEAD Stone and Plaster***, 62-64, no. 47, pl. 47; Gawlikowski, "Dieux de Palmyre", 2617; Mathiesen, ***Sculpture***, 210, no. 183, fig. 60.

The relief was found in nine pieces on the floor of ***naos*** 1. At the bottom a deep border projects to serve as the base for the military figure, who is identified by the inscription on the border as 'Iarḫibol, the sacred stone of the source' (above, no.16). The god is depicted frontally, his feet firmly planted on the base of the relief. His raised right hand holds a lance or sceptre, with his left hand he grasps the hilt of a sword or dagger. A plain bracelet adorns his wrist. Iarḫibol is wearing a Roman anatomical cuirass over a short-sleeved tunic reaching to his knees. A cloak is thrown back over the shoulders and bellies out behind. It is fastened on Iarḫibol's right shoulder with a round brooch, originally set with a gem. The god's lower legs are bare and he is wearing high sandals. The face is badly damaged; only the huge left eye is intact. It is encircled by a lot of wavy hair that almost reaches to the shoulders. The hair is parted in the middle and is adorned by a narrow diadem. In the background behind the god's head rays are incised, originally 13 in number. Above his shoulder the horns of a moon crescent are cut.

The inscription is undated. The reference to Palmyrene bowmen suggests that it has to be dated in the Roman period, between 165 and 192 CE.[237] This is supported by the style of the relief. Stylistically, it belongs to a large group of local sculptures, which are characterizedd primarily by flatness and linearity. The figures on these reliefs may be characterized as clumsy, their poses as awkward and unnatural. Their hair is usually arranged in some version of the aureole style. The drapery is schematic and hardly follows the contours of the body.[238] Three reliefs from this group, the two Mithraic reliefs and the relief dedicated to Bel, can be dated in 168, 170-171, and 173-174 CE respectively.[239] In all likelihood, therefore, the present relief likewise dates from the second half of the second century CE.

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[236] This possibility was suggested to me by Professor Gawlikowski in writing. Responsibility for the argumentation lies entirely with the present author.

[237] Chapter I, 16.

[238] *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 259-264, the so-called 'Mithras-Asheru and Saᶜad group'.

Pl. VII. *Statuette representing Nabû*

Small statue cut of local gypsum, H. 0. 24 m., W. 0. 18 m, Th. 0. 13. YUAG 1938. 5304. Published: *TEAD* VII-VIII,266, pl. XXXVI, 1; *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 64-65, no. 48, pl. 48; Mathiesen, *Sculpture*, 210, no. 184, fig. 61.

The statuette is free standing, but only the front is finished. The Palmyrene inscription on the base identifies the figure as the god Nabû (above, no. 17). The god is standing frontally beside a rectangular altar. His left leg is straight, his right knee bent with the foot slightly turned outwards. The left arm is not represented. The god's right arm is stretched across his chest. Between the thumb and finger of the right hand he is holding something long and narrow against a flat object which rests on the edge of the altar and touches his left shoulder. The top of the object is broken off; on the bottom portion vertical ridges are incised. This object is probably to be identified as a lyre. Hence the object in the god's right hand is a plectrum. The god is wearing a long mantle and a tunic. The tunic is girdled at the waist and falls to the ground around the bare feet. The head is seriously damaged and the facial features are completely obliterated. The hair is curly and descends on either side of the face in deep waves. Traces of a leafy garland which bound the hair are still visible. There is a squared off projection below the chin, which suggests that the god had a stiff, clubbed beard. Apart from the beard, the iconography of Nabû resembles that of the Greek god Apollo *Citharoedus*.[240]

The inscription on the plinth is not dated. Stylistically, the statuette belongs to the same group of local sculptures as the relief representing Iarḥibol, which was found in the same sanctuary. In all likelihood the small statue representing Nabû likewise dates from the second half of the second century CE.

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[239] Below, 253-254 and 267-272.

[240] Chapter V, 128.

Fig. 12. *Fragment of a round common-ware mold*
Unpublished. The present description and figure are based upon the field notes and the design of F. Brown, which are kept in the archives of the YUAG.

The fragment was found in the lower level of room 10, and must consequently predate the rebuilding of this part of the complex. It comprises about one quarter of the original object, and contains a representation on both sides. One side depicts a figure wearing a Roman cuirass and a *paludamentum*. Apparently he is wearing a helmet. His extended left hand held an object that has not been preserved. To his right a small *thymiaterion* is depicted. A lower arm is still visible above this altar. It is all that remains of the central figure, who was probably shown offering incense. The reverse side depicts a biga or a quadriga. The hind legs of the horses and a wheel of a chariot are all that remain of this representation. Both scenes are encircled by a narrow decorative band.

Both representations are extremely fragmentary and therefore difficult to interpret. The military figure may be human or divine. Roman soldiers as well as a number of Palmyrene deities are depicted in this outfit. Consequently, the scene must either belong to a Roman or a Palmyrene context. In view of the person making an offering in front of the military figure it is most probable that that the latter represents a Palmyrene god. The biga or quadriga that is depicted on the reverse may likewise be related to a secular or divine event. The motif is uncommon in the local iconography of Palmyra. The only instance is provided by a relief from the temple of Bel that depicts Bel in a wagon that is drawn by one horse. However, as far as can be told from the available evidence, the wagon is related to the specific event that is illustrated by this relief; normally Bel is not associated with a wagon on Palmyrene representations.[241] The only Palmyrene god that is traditionally represented in a wagon is Malakbel, but his chariot is drawn by griffins instead of horses (fig. 21).[242] In contrast, the biga or quadriga are well known in the iconography of Rome, where it is a common attribute of Sol-Helios. If correct, this suggests that the mold dates from the Roman period.[243]

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[241] For a description and interpretation of this relief, see above, Chapter V, 147 ff.

[242] Above, 248-253.

[243] The mould is to be compared to a series from Palmyra, published by H. Seyrig, "Plaquettes votives de terre-cuite", *AAAS* 1 (1955), 147-156. On Dura moulds and plaques, see S. B. Downey, "Teracotta plaques as Evidence for Connections between Palmyra and Dura-Europos", *Palmyra and the Silk Road* (International Colloquium Palmyra 7-11 April 1992; Damascus 1996), 253-260. No Palmyrene copies are known from this piece.

WALL PAINTINGS

Hundreds of tiny fragments of painted plaster were found on the floor of the *pronaos* (2). Originally, all the walls of the *pronaos* were painted. The bases of the walls were left blank. At 0. 90 m. from the floor ran a heavy red border. The subjects were disposed in panels of irregular width, separated by similar red borders. Only five fragments were big enough to be of interest and were published. Originally, the figures represented on these fragments were about 0. 70 - 0. 80 m. heigh. YUAG 1935 558 A-E. Published: *TEAD* VII-VIII, 239 and 272-274 (Brown), pl. XXVIII, 1-3.

Fig. 9. a. *Head and right shoulder of a bearded god with polos*
The deity faces front. He has large staring eyes, short dark hair and a short moustache and beard. On his head is a small *polos* with three white stripes. Behind his head a round nimbus is painted in heavy outlines in red-ochre. The inside is not painted. Around his neck the god apparently wore a necklace. The segment of the shoulder shows deep folds.

Fig. 9. b. *Heads of a bearded god and a young deity with radiant nimbus*
On the left-hand side is the head of a bearded figure with *polos* and a round nimbus, very similar to the figure depicted on fragment *a*. The god is represented in three quarter view, and is looking at a young beardless deity represented at the right-hand side of the fragment. He faces almost full front, but his eyes are turned towards his companion. Behind his head is a round nimbus with rays. The left shoulder of this solar deity is represented higher than his right shoulder. To the left of the god's head traces remain of his raised hand.

Fig. 9. c. *Right side of the head of a young beardless deity with radiant nimbus*
The god faces full front. He is very similar to the sun god represented on fragment *b*.

Fig. 9. d. *Left side of a head and the right arm of an adjacent figure*
The head faces almost full front, but is looking to the left. It has an aureole of curly hair and a moustache and a beard. There is no nimbus, which suggests the figure was a minor deity (demon?) or a mortal. To his left is the uplifted bare arm of an adjacent figure. The missing hand held an object, the end of which is visible beside the head.

Fig. 9. e. ***Fragment representing two wheels and a booted foot***
At the right-hand side is a booted leg with a bit of leg above it. The outlines of the boot are red, the inside is left white with shadows of grey and red. The leg has dark outlines and is coloured red-ochre. At the left-hand side are two eight-spoked wheels in black. They are about the same size as the boot. Above the left wheel are red curving outlines; possibly the body of a chariot or cart.

The paucity of fragments in relation to the total wall space makes it impossible to determine the arrangements of the panels and to reconstruct their subject with certainty. The remaining fragments give few clues as to their subject matter. They appear to have been narrative, probably mythological, in character. This may be inferred from the fact that a bearded god and a solar deity appear together and separately in various scenes (*a-c*). On one fragment (*c*) they look and gesture at each other. The dramatic relation between these two figures stands in marked contrast to the static composition of the majority of the representations found in Dura-Europos and underlines the narrative character of the scenes. Furthermore, fragment *d* shows a fight in which mortals or minor deities appear to be involved.

The identity of the bearded god and the sun god cannot be established with certainty. Given the fact that the paintings were found in a Palmyrene sanctuary, it is reasonable to suppose they depict Palmyrene gods. The god with the beard and the *polos* best fits the iconography of Baalshamin.[244] However, it is also possible that he has to be identified as Bel.[245] In Palmyra three solar deities were worshipped; Iarḥibol, Malakbel and Shamash. Both Iarḥibol and Malakbel were worshipped in the temple of the Gaddê in Dura-Europos.[246] Iarḥibol is normally associated with Bel, whereas Malakbel accompanies Baalshamin. However, since it is not clear whether the bearded god represented on the murals represents Bel or Baalshamin, it is impossible to identify the sun god with certainty. Malakbel is frequently associated with a chariot, and fragment *e* may therefore support the identification of the sun god as Malakbel.[247] However, it is equally possible that the chariot is related to Bel. On a relief from the temple of Bel in Palmyra, Bel is represented in a chariot while fighting the chaos monster Tiamat.[248] This illustrates an event described in the Babylonian epic of creation, which is in turn related to the Akitu festival. In Palmyra as well as elsewhere, this festival was celebrated at the beginning of the month Nisan. The two cult reliefs from the temple of the Gaddê were both dedicated in this month, and it is therefore not unreasonable to suppose that the chariot on the Dura fragment is part of a scene which illustrates the battle of Bel against Tiamat. Fragment *d*, representing a combat in which various figures are involved, favours this identification.

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[244] On the iconography of this god, see above, Chapter IV, note 66.

[245] On most representation known so far Bel is represented without a beard. However, we know of several possible exceptions to this rule, and it cannot be excluded that the god depicted on the mural fragments has to be identified as such.

[246] Above, 253 and 248.

[247] *TEAD* VII-VIII, 272.

[248] Above, Chapter V, 147 ff., for a detailed description and analysis of this Palmyrene relief.

The murals were painted on a fine coat of whitewash laid on a second layer of plaster over an original unpainted coat. From this it is clear that the walls of the *pronaos* stood for a considerable time before they were covered with paintings. This is supported by the style of the paintings, which points to a date in the first half of the third century CE. Only limited use is made of colours, and the execution is very free. The faces of the figures are expressive and frequently painted in three-quarter view. In both style and technique they are closest to the paintings of 194 CE in a private house in block M7, and to the paintings from the middle Mithraeum, which are to be dated in the beginning of the third century CE.[249]

BUILDING HISTORY

With the construction of the final sanctuary the two units of the former complex were joined (fig. 8).[250] The new temple court was entered from H-street by a monumental doorway, situated slightly off the axis of the entrance of the sanctuary unit at the back of the court. This unit consisted of a broad ***pronaos*** (rooms 2a and 2b of the former complex), and a narrow ***naos*** that projected beyond the courtyard wall (3). The rear wall of the ***naos*** is occupied by three arched niches, which framed the two reliefs representing the Gaddê of Tadmor and of Dura described above. To the north of the new ***pronaos*** the small room (6) from the previous period remained intact. It probably functioned as a sacristy. The ***pronaos*** was surrounded by a narrow bench. Since it is too low for seating, it was probably intended for votive offerings. The sanctuary unit was entered through a monumental porch projecting from the façade of the ***pronaos***. A small aedicula, dedicated by Maliku, the son of Iarḫai, the son of Naṣor, was built against the façade to the south of the entrance (above, no. 11).

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[249] For the paintings from the so-called 'house of the banquet', compare below, 291-293. On the paintings from the middle Mithraeum, see *TEAD* VII-VIII, 115-116.

[250] *TEAD* VII-VIII, 234-255. Downey, *Mesopotamian Religious Architecture*, 115-117, fig. 50.

The temple court was flanked on the south by a large rectangular room (4) that was entered from the court by a portico of two columns. Opposite the entrance, against the south wall of the room, were a low podium and an altar. The other walls were surrounded with benches, which suggests the room functioned as a meeting place. The west end of room 4 opened up to a small room (5). The back of this room contained three niches, very similar to the niches at the back of *naos* 3. They presumably once held images of divinities, and hence room 5 can be labelled a subsidiary chapel. A narrow doorway in its north wall gave access to room 2, the adjacent *pronaos*. Despite this connection, it is clear that they formed separate units.

A private house adjacent to the north of the sanctuary was incorporated into the original complex with only a minimum of destruction.[251] Both in plan and in function this northern building retained many characteristics of a private house. It was organised around a court with a portico on its eastern side (10). Against the west wall of this portico stood a monumental base intended for statues of some sort, bearing a Latin inscription of the twentieth Palmyrene cohort (above, no. 24). In the court two altars were found. At the back of the court was a complex consisting of two rooms (8 and 9). At least one altar was found in room 8, and this suggests a religious function. Against the rear wall of room 9 are several niches. Greek graffiti on the bases of these niches list groups of men and their contributions of food (above, nos. 25-26). From this it may be inferred that the rooms were used for sacred meals.[252] The remainder of the rooms, in the northern part of the complex, do not seem to have served a religious purpose and probably had a social function. A door in the north east corner of the complex opened onto the street. The northern and the southern complex were connected by a long narrow room (7). The northern half of this room was surrounded by benches. An aedicula was incorporated in its north wall. In front of this niche an altar was found bearing a fragmentary Greek dedication to Iarḫibol (above, no. 23).

The rebuilding of the southern building, i.e. the temple proper, may be dated around the middle of the second century CE, on the basis of the cult reliefs of the

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[251] *TEAD* VII-VIII, 248-255.

[252] Brown, *TEAD* VII-VIII, 254, infers from these graffiti that the niches of room 9 functioned as cupboards. Consequently he assumes that room 9 functioned as a storeroom. However, graffiti of this kind are common in rooms used for religious dining and do not necessarily imply that the food was kept here. The niches may therefore very well have contained cult images of some sort.

Gaddê that were dedicated in 159 CE. Hence the new sanctuary was constructed shortly before Parthian domination came to an end in Dura. According to Frank Brown, the private house to the north of the sanctuary was incorporated into the complex with the rebuilding of the sanctuary.[253] However, all the inscriptions from this part of the building date from the Roman period (above, nos. 22-26). They are in Greek or Latin and display a military influence. This suggests that its construction should be dated after 165 CE.[254] This is perhaps confirmed by the small terracotta mold that was found in the floor-fill of room 10 (above, 255). This object displays Roman influence and hence suggests that the city was in Roman hands at the time construction work began. The ground plan of the temple sustains this alternative reconstruction, but new excavations are needed in order to substantiate this hypothesis.

THE EARLY MITHRAEUM

The Dura Mithraeum is located in block J7 to the south of tower 2. The earliest datable evidence from the shrine consists of a small bas-relief with a Palmyrene dedicatory inscription dated 168-169 CE. It may safely be assumed that the Mithraeum was founded shortly before this date. There is no evidence that an earlier Mithraeum occupied the spot and that Mithras was worshipped in Parthian Dura.[255] Apparently, the advent of Mithras at Dura coincided with the beginning of Roman control in 165 CE.[256] The development of the building clearly follows the growth of the military community in Dura. The first building was small, from which it may be inferred that it served the needs of a small community. In the third century the original shrine was twice rebuilt on a larger and more ambitious scale. Around 209-210 CE Antonius Valentius, centurion of the *Legiones IV Scythia* and *XVI Flavia Firma*, more than doubled the original dimensions of the shrine, remodelled it as a basilica and introduced an arched cult niche at its rear wall.[257] The sanctuary was undoubtedly enlarged in order to accommodate new members drawn from the expanded garrison that had settled in Dura. Around the beginning of the third century CE Dura changed into a frontier town of considerable military importance, and the northern part of the city in which the Mithraeum is located was converted into a Roman camp.[258] The building was again reconstructed and enlarged around 240 CE.[259] At this time the shrine was redecorated with elaborate frescoes. These paintings were found *in situ* in an excellent state of preservation, since they were covered by the embankment of the city walls a few years after their fabrication.[260]

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[253] *TEAD* VII-VIII, 248-255.

[254] This is perhaps substantiated by the aedicula and the altar dedicated to Iarḥibol from room 7. As discussed above, the altar probably dates from the Roman period. It seems logical to assume that the altar and the aedicula are contemporary. The aedicula was built into the opening of the *diwan* doorway of the preexisting house and is therefore contemporary with the rebuilding of the northern complex (*TEAD* VII-VIII, 248, fig. 64).

[255] L. Campbell, "Typology of Mithraic Tauroctones", *Berytus* 11 (1954), 31, considers the shrine of Epicinus and Alexander, dedicated to 'the god' the first Dura Mithraeum: *TEAD* VII-VIII, 128-134, nos. 867-869. Cf. also J. Helgeland, "Roman Army Religion", *ANRW* 16. 2 (1978), 1494. However, there is no reason to identify the god from inscriptions 867-869 as Mithras. Furthermore, no remains of bones were found in the furniture of the first sanctuary, from which it may be inferred that the early shrine was the first Mithraeum on the spot: *TEAD* VII-VIII, 67.

[256] Cumont, "Dura Mithraeum", 177, assumes the cult of Mithras came to Dura via Palmyra and initially was of a local Syrian character. The local character of the cult is not substantiated by the evidence (cf. below, 268-269). Consequently there are no reasons to assume a Palmyrene origin. Furthermore, the cult of Mithras is not attested in Palmyra. Therefore it is more reasonable to suppose Palmyrene soldiers encountered the cult elsewhere in the Roman Empire, before they were stationed in Dura.

Due to the rebuilding of the shrine in the third century CE, very little is known about the first forty years of its existence. The two cult reliefs that were re-used in the cult niche of the final building are all that can certainly be attributed to the first Mithraeum. The two later periods are rich in frescoes and graffiti, but there are none from the first period. Hence the dedicatory inscriptions of the two reliefs are the only source of information on Mithras' worshippers in the early period. They show that the early Mithraeum was founded by Palmyrene bowmen who served in the Roman army. In the third century the Mithraeum was likewise visited by the military. We have no proof that Palmyrenes still visited the shrine during this period. However, we only have a partial insight into the clientele of the second and third Mithraeum, since only a small amount of the hundreds of graffiti have been published to date.[261] For this reason the following discussion is confined to the early shrine.

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[257] *TEAD* VII-VIII, 85, no. 847. On the architecture of the second or middle Mithraeum: *TEAD* VII-VIII, 70-76, fig. 33. On the fragments of its painted decoration, idem, 101-104, fig. 36, pl. XIII; F. Cumont, "The Dura Mithraeum", *Mithraic Studies. Proceedings of the First International Congress of Mithraic Studies*, vol. 1 (ed. J. R. Hinnels; Manchester 1975), 192-194, pl. 26 a. On the graffiti and dipinti, see *TEAD* VII-VIII, 116-128, nos. 854-866; Cumont, "Dura Mithraeum", 194-205, pl. 31; E. D. Francis, "Mithraic Graffiti from Dura-Europos", *Mithraic Studies*, vol 2 (ed. J.R. Hinnells; Manchester 1975), 424-445. Only a fraction of the total of about 230 Mithraic graffiti and dipinti were published. The complete edition of these texts, promised by E. D. Francis in 1975, was never published.

[258] Chapter I, 13.

[259] *TEAD* VII-VIII, 76-80, figs. 34-35, pls. I-III.

[260] The shrine of the late Mithraeum, with the two reliefs and the paintings, is on display in the Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven. On the paintings: *TEAD* VII-VIII, 89-90, 104-116, pls. XIV-XVIII; Cumont, "Dura Mithraeum", 169-192, pls. 21-30 (partly in colour).

INSCRIPTIONS

27. Pl. VIII. *PAT no. 1085* (revised reading)

Palmyrene inscription inscribed on the plinth of the small Mithraic relief (below, 267-269), enclosed in a *tabula ansata.* YUAG 1935. 97. Published: M. Rostovtzeff, "Das Mithraeum von Dura", *RM* 49 (1934), 195; *InvD,* 11-12, no. 19; *TEAD* VII-VIII, 83-84, no. 845; *CIMRM* I, 63, no. 39; Francis, "Mithraic Graffiti", 425.

> *dkrn ṭb ʿbd ʾtpny ʾsṭr[ṭg]ʾ*
> *br ẓbdʿh dy ʿl qšṭʾ dy bdwrʾ*
> *byrḥ ʾdr šnt 4. 100+80*
>
> A good memorial. Made by Atpeni the strategos, the son of Zabdea, who (is) in command of the archers who (are) in Dura. In the month Adar of the year 480 (168-169 CE)

PAT no. 1085 is accompanied by the wrong Greek text, cf. *PAT* no. 1078.

l. 1: *ʾtpny,* Atpeni, 'Athe has turned', a verbal sentence with perfect containing the name of the goddess Athe.[262] The present inscription provides the only instance of the name in inscriptions from Dura-Europos. By contrast, the name is attested several times in Palmyra.[263]

ʾsṭrṭg, 'military commander', transcribes Greek στρατηγός. In Palmyrene inscriptions this word designated different functions. In the third century it was the title of the supreme magistrate of the city, i.e. a high official or commander, whose office was not necessarily military.[264] In addition, the term was used for military officials in command of a local military force, or of a region which fell under the jurisdiction of Palmyra.[265] Their relationship with

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[261] Francis, "Mithraic Graffiti", 424-445.

[262] Stark, *Personal Names,* 73-74.

[263] Stark, *Personal Names,* 8.

[264] H. Ingholt, "Deux inscriptions bilingues de Palmyre", *Syria* 13 (1932), 278-289; J.. Starcky, "Une inscription palmyrénienne trouvée près de l'Euphrate", *Syria* 40 (1963), 51-53; M. Gawlikowski, "Palmyre et l'Euphrate", *Syria* 60 (1983), 67, note 87.

[265] Two inscriptions that were found between Palmyra and the Euphrates, *PAT* nos. 2732 and 2810, both dated around 100 CE,, mention a *strategos* controlling the desert near the Euphrates.

Rome is not entirely clear. Some of the *strategoi* mentioned by the inscriptions were in all likelihood appointed by Rome, but it is not clear whether this was the rule.[266] In the present inscription, the word is undoubtedly used in the latter sense. By analogy with the use of the term in Palmyra, it can therefore be assumed that Atpeni was in command of a local Palmyrene military force stationed in Dura. In view of the Roman occupation of Dura at this time, it is reasonable to suppose that the men under his command were in some way related to the Roman army. Unfortunately it is impossible to be more precise.

l. 2: ***zbdʿh***, Zabdea, a variant of the names *zbdʿy* or ***zbdʿth***, 'gift of Athe'.[267] The writing of the letter ***he*** is peculiar and tallies with the writing of old Syriac.[268] The present inscription provides the only instance of the name in Palmyrene inscriptions from Dura-Europos. In contrast, the Greek transcription Ζαβαδάτης is common. The name was not confined to Palmyrenes resident in Dura.[269] The Latin transcription Zabdaathes is frequently attested in the military papyri from Dura.[270] *zbdʿy*, *zbdʿtʾ*, and ***zbdʿth*** are common names in Palmyra.[271] However, combined with the name Atpeni, solely attested in Palmyra, we may safely conclude that the dedicant of the relief was of Palmyrene origin.

l. 3: *qšt*, 'archer'. The present inscription provides the earliest datable instance of this group of Palmyrenes in Dura-Europos. Palmyrene archers belonging to the Bene Mita dedicated a relief to Iarḥibol in the temple of the Gaddê (above, no. 16).

PAT no. 1378 (199 CE) mentions a ***strategos*** under whose command nomad groups were defeated. *PAT* no. 2757 (225 CE), mentions a ***strategos*** in command of the Palmyrene troups stationed at Anath and Gambla

[266] The ***strategos*** of Anath and Gambla, mentioned in *PAT* no. 2757 (225 CE), was in all likelihood appointed by Rome.

[267] *TEAD PP*, 62; Stark, *Personal Names*, 86.

[268] *TEAD* VII-VIII, 84. *PAT* reads an ***aleph***. However, the writing deviates from the other ***alephs*** in the inscription.

[269] Ζαβαδάτης is attested *TEAD* IV, 77, no. 177 (graffito from tower 12, n.d.), and *TEAD PP*, no. 17 B: Βαρβαῖ(ος) Ζαβαδάτης.

[270] *TEAD PP*, index, 439.

[271] Stark, *Personal Names*, 86.

28. Pl. VIII. *TEAD VII-VIII, 83-84, no. 845*
Dipinto written vertically at the left-hand side of the small Mithraic relief. YUAG 1935. 97. Published: Rostovtzeff, "Mithraeum von Dura", 195; *CIMRM* I, 63, no. 38.

> [Ἐθ]φανει ἰσταρτήγα
>
> Ethphani the commander.

In his article published in 1934, Rostovtzeff (with a reference to Torrey), restores ʼΑθπανει. This was later changed in the restoration cited above. On the writing ἰσταρτήγα, see Rosenthal, *Sprache*, 31, note 5.

29. Pl. IX. *TEAD VII-VIII, 84-85, no. 846*
Greek inscription inscribed on the base of the larger Mithraic relief (below, 269-272). YUAG 1935. 98. Published:Rostovtzeff, "Mithraeum von Dura",195; *CIMRM* I, 65, no. 41; Milik, *Dédicaces*, 336; Francis, "Mithraic Graffiti", 427.

> Θεοῦ (sic) Μίθτραν ἐπόησεν Ζηνόβιος ὁ καὶ Εἰαειβᾶςʼ Ιαριβωλέους
> στρατηγὸς τοξοτῶν ἔτους δευτέρου πὐ
>
> For the god Mithras. Made by Zenobios who also (is called) Eiaeibas, (the son) of Iariboles, commander of the archers, in the year 482 (170-171 CE).

l. 1: Ζηνόβιος, Zenobios, a name of Greek origin. Zenobios is commonly recognised as the Greek equivalent of the Semitic name Zebida and its hypocoristicon Zabbai.[272] Francis therefore argues that Zenobios is to be identified as Zabdea, the father of Atpeni who dedicated the small Mithraic relief in 168-169 CE.[273] This is most unlikely. It may be inferred from bilingual inscriptions from Palmyra that the conjunction ὁ καί or ὁ ἐπικαλούμενος between a Greek and Semitic name indicates that we are dealing with names of the same individual.[274] In all probability, therefore, Eiaeibas is

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[272] Rosenthal, *Sprache*, 93.

[273] Francis, "Mithraic Graffiti", 436.

[274] Greek or Semitic aliases are attested less frequently in inscriptions from Dura than may perhaps be expected. The usual formula in Dura is ὁ ἐπικαλούμενος, not ὁ καί. Cf. the instances cited by Welles, "Gods of Dura-Europos", 265. However, both expressions are frequently attested in inscriptions from Palmyra. Cf. the instances listed by Rosenthal, *Sprache*, 92-94. It should be noted that the meaning of the expression is ambiguous in Palmyrene inscriptions. Whereas in case of the juxtaposition of a Greek and a Semitic name the expression refers to a nickname, several

Zenobios' Semitic alias. Arguing that the name was common in Dura, Rostovtzeff assumes that Zenobios was of Durene origin and was in command of a local desert police, instead of the Palmyrene archers.[275] Apart from the fact that we have no evidence for such a Durene militia, it is not true that Zenobios was a common name in Dura. In spite of its Greek origin, the name is only attested in the Roman period.[276] Even in this period instances of the name are rare.[277] The name is familiar in Palmyra, but rare elsewhere in Syria.[278] We may therefore conclude that Zenobios was a Palmyrene. This is confirmed by his Palmyrene alias.

Εἰαειβᾶς, transcribes the Palmyrene name *yhybʾ*, Iahiba, a name that derives from the root *yhb*, 'to give'.[279] As stated above, Zenobios usually transcribes the name Zebida, a name composed with a verb that has the same meaning. This parallelism probably prompted the choice of the Greek alias Zenobios.[280] The name is attested twice in Palmyrene inscriptions from Dura-Europos. The father of one of the painters of the *diwan* in the house of block M7 is called Iahiba (below no. 32). The same name is possibly attested in the *pronaos* of the temple of the Gadde (above, no. 21).

l. 2: 'Ιαριβωλῆς, Iariboles. This is the Greek transcription of the Palmyrene name *yrḥbwlʾ*, i.e. a divine name used as a personal name. The Palmyrene name occurs on an altar found at the Palmyrene gate (below, no. 57). The present relief provides the only instance of the Greek transcription of the name in Dura-Europos. The Latin transcriptions Iaraboles, Iarhaboles and Ieraboles occur frequently in the military papyri of Dura.[281] It is one of the names that is most frequently attested in Palmyra.[282]

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bilingual inscriptions juxtapose two Semitic names. The second name in all these instances is the last of a genealogy: H. Ingholt, "Inscriptions and Sculptures from Palmyra I", *Berytus* 3 (1936), 107.

[275] Rostovtzeff, "Mithraeum von Dura", 195-199.

[276] *TEAD PP*, 59

[277] *TEAD* VI, 129, no. 644 b and c; 133, nos. 653-655 (graffiti from a house in block C3, n.d.); *TEAD* IX, iii, 312, n. 9; perhaps in an unpublished graffito from the middle Mithraeum, mentioned by Francis, "Mithraic Graffiti", 436. The Latin transcription Zenobius occurs three times in the military papyri: *TEAD PP*, index, 440.

[278] *IGLS* III, nos. 1035; 1071 (region of Antioch); *IGLS* V, no. 2703 (Nazala, 150-158 CE).

[279] Wuthnow, *Semitischen Menschennamen*, 145, with variant spelling 'Ιαειβᾶς.

[280] Rosenthal, *Sprache*, 93-94.

[281] *TEAD PP*, index, 433.

[282] Stark, *Personal Names*, 26-28, and 91.

30 a-c. Pl. IX. *TEAD VII-VIII, 97-98, nos. 850-852*
Greek inscriptions accompanying the three figures represented on the Mithraic relief dated 170-171 CE. YUAG 1935. 98.

a. To the right of the offering figure represented on the right-hand side of the relief:

Ζηνόβιος

Zenobios

The dedicant of the relief (above, no. 29).

b. Above the head of the smaller figure standing next to Zenobios:

Ἰαριβωλῆς

Iariboles

It follows from the dedicatory inscription that Zenobios' father was called Iariboles. Hence most scholars assume that the Iariboles depicted on the relief is a relative of the dedicant. According to Rostovtzeff the figure is to be identified as one of Zenobios' ancestors, whereas Cumont argues that he is Zenobios' son.[283] Both interpretations are possible, but it is questionable whether we are indeed dealing with a relative of the dedicant. As stated above, Iariboles was a very common name in Palmyra. Consequently, he may very well be a Palmyrene not related to Zenobios. We shall return to Iariboles' identity in the discussion of the relief.

c. To the left of the head of the third figure:

Βαρναάδαθ

Barnaadath

The present inscription provides the only instance of the name in inscriptions from Dura-Europos. In all likelihood it is a misspelling of the name Barhadad,

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[283] Cumont, "Dura Mithraeum", 167; Rostovtzeff, "Mithraeum von Dura", 187-188.

'son of Hadad'.[284] This Aramaic name is fairly common in Dura, and is spelled Βαραδάδης, Βαραδάδος Βααδάδαδος.[285] The Latin transcription Barhadadus is attested in the military papyri.[286] The name is not attested in Palmyra. This undermines the assumption that Iariboles and Barnaadath are relatives of the dedicant. The name rather favours the hypothesis that Barnaadath came from Dura or the middle Euphrates region.

SCULPTURE

Pl. VIII. *Small relief representing Mithras killing the bull dated 168-169 CE*
Rectangular stele made of local gypsum, H. 0. 42, W. 0. 57 m. The relief was brightly painted and abundant traces of colour remained when it was found. Most, if not all, of the paint was applied later, probably during one of the redecorations of the shrine. The rosettes and Mithras' cap were adorned with jewels, which were removed in antiquity. Green glaze pottery and precious stones are still visible in the upper border. YUAG 1935. 97. Published: Rostovtzeff, "Mithraeum von Dura", 188; *TEAD* VII-VIII, 92-94., pl. XXIX, i; *CIMRM* I, 62, no. 37; Cumont, "Dura Mithraeum", 165-166, pls. 22-23; Perkins, *Art of Dura-Europos*, 84-86, pl. 34; *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 22-25, no. 7, fig. 7; Mathiesen, *Sculpture*, 196, no. 172, fig. 52.

The relief was found *in situ* against the west wall of the final Mithraeum and represents the traditional Mithras tauroconus. Mithras' head, chest and right leg are frontal, his left leg and arms are in profile. The god leans against the bull's side, his left leg drawn up, his right leg standing firmly on the ground. His left hand pulls back the bull's head; with his right hand he stabs a dagger into its throat. Mithras is wearing the typical Persian dress; a Phrygian cap, a long-sleeved tunic and mantle, Parthian trousers and boots. He is beardless and has short curly hair. The bull faces to the right and has been forced to the ground; his right foreleg is folded beneath his body, his left leg outstretched. The bull's hind legs are fully extended, thus raising its rump in the air. In front of the bull a small dog leaps to the wound in its throat. Just below the dog is a snake, that likewise leaps against the wound of the bull. Originally in high relief, the animal was intentionally removed in antiquity, thus leaving only its outlines. On the left, a raven flies towards the head of the god. A crescent moon is portrayed to the left of Mithras' head, to the right is a sun. Both are aniconic and originally held a jewel. They were intentionally smashed in antiquity in order to remove the stones.

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[284] *TEAD PP*, 63. In contrast, Torrey, *TEAD* VII-VIII, 447, suggests that the second element of the name is explained as a telescoping of *'Nabû haddeth* 'Nabu has restored'.

[285] *TEAD* I, 46 (on an altar found near the Palmyrene gate, n.d., Roman period); *TEAD* V, 146-147, no. 454 (graffito from the temple of Azzanathkona, n.d., Roman period); *TEAD* VI, 36-37, no. 616 (graffito from a private house in block E4, n.d., Roman period); *TEAD PP*, no. 21 (first half of the second century CE).

[286] *TEAD PP*, index, 430.

The scene by and large tallies with the usual type of Mithras tauroconus. In several respects, however, the iconography deviates from the majority of similar representations. On the Dura relief Cautes and Cautopates are missing, the scorpion is not represented, and the tail of the bull does not end in wheat ears. The snake is usually depicted coming from behind and its position below the dog on the Durene relief is unusual. In contrast to their usual placement, the sun is depicted on the right-hand side, and the moon on the left-hand side of the relief.

These iconographic peculiarities have been cited by Cumont as proof for the provincial, local character of the Mithraic cult in Syria before the Severan era. According to this hypothesis, the early cult was only adapted to common Roman practice in the third century CE.[287] Several alterations to the relief which date from the third century are cited in favour of this hypothesis. This theory presupposes an orthodox form of mithraism in both cult and in artistic expression that is questionable.[288] Moreover, the number of Syrian tauroctone reliefs are limited and they differ considerably among themselves. Consequently generalisations are dangerous.[289] It cannot be said that Syrian tauroctones clearly represent a different tradition from that of Europe.[290] This holds true for the present relief as well. The absence of the torchbearers, the scorpion, the wheat ears at the end of the bull's tail, and the position of the sun and the moon, are not unique, nor are they confined to Syrian representations of the tauroctone.[291] The hypothesis that the snake was removed in the later period because of its uncanonical position is most unlikely.[292] The position of the snake is the same on the second relief, and here the animal was not erased. [293]

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[287] Cumont, "Dura Mithraeum", 177. Cumont is followed by *TEAD* VII-VIII, 111; L. A. Campbell, *Mithraic Iconography and Ideology* (EPRO 11; Leiden 1968), 176-177. In the late Mithraeum, but probably already in the middle Mithraeum, the cult reliefs were supplemented by a painted tauroctone above the niche. The painted representation differs in at least some respects from the reliefs. According to the above-mentioned scholars, it tallies with the orthodox representation of the event. They suppose this change bears witness of the adaption of the cult to Roman standards. However, the reliefs were re-used in the final sanctuary. Obviously, therefore, the deviant features were not considered to be a major problem.

[288] Francis in his introduction to Cumont's "Dura Mithraeum", 153-154.

[289] The Syrian reliefs are discussed in *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 219-220.

[290] As stated in *TEAD* VII-VIII, 100; Cumont, "Dura Mithraeum", 169

The relief is made of local gypsum. Stylistically it belongs to a group of sculptures fabricated in Dura in the second half of the second century CE. In all likelihood, therefore, the relief was fabricated by a local craftsman in Dura.[294]

Pl. IX. *Relief representing Mithras killing the bull dated 170-171 CE*
Rectangular relief made of local gypsum, H. 0. 76, W. 1. 06 m. Like the preceding relief, it was originally brightly coloured. On the figure of Mithras were found traces of gilt. YUAG 1935.98. Published:Rostovtzeff, "Mithraeum von Dura", 186-188, pl. 12; *TEAD* VII-VIII, 95-101, pls. XXIX, 2-XXX; *CIMRM* I, 63-65, no. 40; Cumont, "Dura Mithraeum", 166-168, pls. 22-23; Perkins, *Art of Dura-Europos*, 86-88, pl. 35; *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 25-29, no. 8, pl. 8; Mathiesen, *Sculpture*, 196-197, no. 173, fig. 53.

The relief was found *in situ* at the back wall of the sanctuary, above the smaller relief described above. According to the Greek dedicatory inscription on the plinth (above, no. 29), it was dedicated in 170-171 CE, two years after the smaller relief was installed. Compared to its predecessor, this relief is far more elaborate. The tauroctone scene is set in an architectural framework consisting of two columns supporting an arch. The slaying of the bull, represented on the left-hand side of the relief, only occupies about half of the relief. On the right-hand side the dedicant and several other figures are represented.

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[291] The absence of the scorpion is not uncommon and especially frequent when the bull is depicted lying on the ground; for example *CIMRM* II, nos. 1422, 1458, 2258. The tail of the bull frequently does not end in wheat ears and consequently we may conclude this was not an essential feature of Mithraic iconography: *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 219. It has been suggested that the aniconic representation of the sun and the moon results from the old oriental tradition of the representation of the planets: *TEAD* VII-VIII, 93; Campbell, *Mithraic Iconography*, 137; *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 219. Compare, however, the Mithraic relief from Morici in Dalmatia that likewise depicts a star and a crescent: E. Will, *Le relief cultuel gréco-romain. Contribution à l'histoire de l'art de l'empire romain* (Paris 1955), 274. Instances in which the sun is depicted on the right and the moon on the left are listed by Will, *Relief cultuel*, 274, (cf. *op. cit.*, 300, note 1).

[292] Contra *TEAD* VII-VIII, 92, note 4; Campbell, *Mithraic Iconography*, 16 and 86.

[293] In all probability its position is not significant; it licks the blood of the bull and thereby fulfils its usual function: Francis in note 99 to Cumont's "Dura Mithraeum"; *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 219 and 224.

[294] *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 259-264. Contra Perkins, *Art of Dura-Europos*, 86, who supposes that it was produced by a sculptor in the service of the Roman army.

The representation of the slaying of the bull on the left-hand side of the relief is more or less identical to the scene on the older relief described above. The only significant difference is the seven egg-shaped balls depicted beneath the bull's outstretched foreleg. This motif is extremely rare in Mithraic iconography and its meaning is not clear. It is perhaps significant that we are dealing with seven balls. Seven is to be an important symbol in Mithras' cult and iconography.[295]

The arch is decorated with signs of the zodiac, which are very carelessly carved. In the centre is the bust of a bearded radiate sky god, wearing a *calathos*, a tunic and mantle. On the left-hand side of the field are traces of a radiant bust, on the right-hand side the traces of a nimbate figure. They are probably to be identified as the sun and the moon respectively. Both were removed in antiquity, probably during the construction of the second Mithraeum. The same holds true for the two busts which were originally depicted in the upper corners of the relief above the columns. In all likelihood they likewise personify the sun and the moon, but they are too crudely executed to enable a certain identification.[296]

On the right-hand side of the relief five figures are depicted. The three larger figures are identified by the accompanying inscriptions in the background as Zenobios, Iariboles and Barnaadath (above, no. 30 a-c). Zenobios, the dedicant of the relief, is depicted at the extreme right. He is much larger than the two other figures. Zenobios is standing frontally, making an offering on a small altar that stands to his right. He wears a short-sleeved tunic and a *himation*. His hair is very schematically rendered; only the locks surrounding the face are indicated.

On the ledge to Zenobios' right, on a much smaller scale, Iariboles and Barnaadath are represented. They are standing frontally with right hands raised in a gesture of worship, the left hand down by their side. Both are clad in a short belted tunic and a mantle and were probably wearing trousers.[297] Iariboles, who stands to the right, carries a sword, whereas Barnaadath does not. The hair of the first is arranged in curls, whereas the head of the latter is surrounded by a high round aureole with no indication of locks. It has been suggested that this is actually a turban.[298] Since no similar head-dress is attested on representations from Dura, it is more probable that the hair is schematically rendered, as with the figure of Zenobios.[299] Two small kneeling figures are represented below the ledge on which Iariboles and Barnaadath are standing. Their outside arms touch the ledge, as if they are carrying it. Their inside arms are lowered, their hands clasped. Like Iariboles and Barnaadath they are wearing a short belted tunic and trousers. In contrast to the three figures described above, they are not identified by an inscription.

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[295] Cf. the various objects listed by Will, *Relief cultuel*, 422, and Francis, "Mithraic Graffiti", 428, note 23. The closest parallel to the seven boulders depicted on the relief from Dura-Europos occurs on a Mithraic relief of unknown provenance, recently published by A. de Jong, "A New Mithraic Relief", *The Israel Museum Journal* 16 (1998), 87-88, fig. 1. The bottom scene of the left register shows a man wearing a Phrygian cap, sitting on a boulder and holding a long object upwards. Before him is a stream (?) running down and passing seven round objects. The author remarks upon the similarity with the relief from Dura-Europos, but does not propose an interpretation.

[296] *TEAD* VII-VIII, 96; Cumont, "Dura Mithraeum", 167. Campbell, *Mithraic Iconography*, 63, proposes to identify the busts as personifications of summer and winter, the two major seasons.

[297] In contrast to the figure on the right, the mantle of the figure on the left is rendered very schematically. However, this is not uncommon in Dura. Compare, for example, the relief dedicated to Asheru and Sha^{c}d, below 324-325.

The identity and function of Iariboles, Barnaadath and the two kneeling figures is disputed. According to Cumont, Iariboles and Barnaadath are Zenobios' sons, whereas the small kneeling figures represent his grandsons.[300] Rostovtzeff identifies Iariboles and Barnaadath as Zenobios' deified ancestors.[301] The hypothesis that these figures are relatives of the dedicant is based upon the name Iariboles. However, Iariboles is one of the most common names in Palmyra, and it is therefore not necessary to suppose that he is related to Zenobios in terms of kinship. Barnaadath, the name of his companion, is not Palmyrene and therefore difficult to reconcile with the hypothesis that he was the son or ancestor of the Palmyrene dedicant. Moreover, family ties were of little importance in Mithraic communities. Instead, worshippers of Mithras were a brotherhood of men who frequently shared the same profession. I therefore propose to identify the four figures as members of the Mithraic community. This is supported by the costume worn by Iariboles, Barnaadath, and the two kneeling figures. All four are clad in the outfit normally worn by Palmyrene archers, the group under Zenobios' command. This hypothesis is substantiated by paintings originating from the middle and the late Mithraeum, which likewise represent members of the cult.[302]

As with the former relief, the iconography of the tauroctone scene does not deviate significantly from other representations of Mithras killing the bull.[303] The only iconographic motif that unequivocally derives from local tradition is the dedicant and his companions represented on the right-hand side of the relief.[304] This accords with the local iconographic tradition to represent the dedicant and his family together with a deity. Here, however, the group of worshippers is not connected by family ties. This implies that a local iconographic motif is adapted and re-interpreted in the light of the organization of a foreign cult.

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[298] *TEAD* VII-VIII, 98, where it is suggested that the headdress was inset with a jewel.

[299] *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 28 and 222.

[300] Cumont, "Dura Mithraeum", 167. Followed by *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 222-223.

[301] Rostovtzeff, "Mithraeum von Dura", 187; idem, *TEAD* VII-VIII, 100. According to E. R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Graeco-Roman World*, vol 10 (Princeton 1964), 79, they are Sasanian deities.

[302] *TEAD* VII-VIII, 90-91.

[303] For the bull-slaying scene, compare the discussion of the older relief. The removal of the sun and the moon has been attributed to their uncanonical position (*TEAD* VII-VIII, 96 and 101). However, their position is the same on the older relief, on which they are preserved: Francis, note 87 to Cumont's "Dura Mithraeum", and *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 224. An architectural

The style of this relief is very similar to the older Mithraic relief, although the carving is flatter and more linear. In all probability therefore, it was likewise fabricated in Dura by a local craftsman.[305]

BUILDING HISTORY

Due to the destruction of the original shrine at the beginning of the third century we can only speculate about its original form.[306] Before the Roman conquest the building which later became a Mithraeum was a private house. This recalls the development of the synagogue and the Christian building in Dura, which were both initially domestic shrines. Unfortunately, it is not clear whether the house was still inhabited when it was converted partly into a Mithraeum. In any case the shrine was fairly small, and consequently we may assume that it originally served the needs of a small community.[307] By analogy with the common placement of the cult image in Mithraea, we may suppose that the two cult reliefs were placed above the altar table at the back of the sanctuary. Thus, as far as can be told from the available evidence, the essential features of the first shrine are typical of Mithraea in the Roman world. The only deviant feature is that it is built entirely above the ground. This is explained by the condition of the soil in Dura, that does not lend itself to an underground structure.[308]

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framework adorned with the planets is frequent on tauroctone reliefs from central Europe: Will, *Relief cultuel*, 298; Campbell, *Mithraic Iconography*, 2 and 8.

[304] *TEAD* VII-VIII, 100; M. Rostovtzeff, *Dura-Europos and its Art* (Oxford 1938), 78; Will, *Relief cultuel*, 34-35. However, the motif is not unique. A sacrificer is also depicted on a tauroctone relief from Mannheim: *CIMRM*, II no. 1275.

[305] *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 220 and 259-267.

[306] Cf. the reconstructions proposed by Pearson in *TEAD* VII-VIII, 64-70, figs. 30-32, and the critical remarks and deviant reconstruction proposed by Rostovtzeff and Cumont cited by Francis, "Mithraic Graffiti", 427, with note 14, and the position of Cumont, "Dura Mithraeum", 163-164.

[307] The original shrine was 4. 62 m. long and 5. 80 m. wide. The lateral podia, 0. 72 m. high, were 1. 70 m. wide. This provides room for about twenty persons.

[308] *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 217.

RELIGIOUS BUILDING IN BLOCK M5

On April 7 1993, a small relief with a Palmyrene dedicatory inscription was found in a room measuring 11. 15 x 8. 35 m. in the northern part of block M5, a block located south of the main street, close to the Palmyrene gate. At present the room has only been partly excavated, and many aspects of its history and function are still unclear. A preliminary report on this room was recently published by P. Leriche.[309]

INSCRIPTION

31. Pl. X. *CRAI 1994, 15-17, fig. 2*

Palmyrene inscription on the base of a bas-relief found in the northern part of block M5 (below, 275-278). The surface of the stone is damaged on the right-hand side, as a consequence of which the beginning of the three lines is wholly missing. The editor suggests that the original length of the inscription was about 0. 30 m. The relief is presently on display in the museum of Deir el Zor (Syria).

1. *[byrḥ ? šn]t 400 + 20 + 20 + 20 + 20 + 7*
2. *[? qrb- ?-]br šlmn [br y]lqt*
3. *[? mṣbʾ dnh ? l] bl*

[In the month ? of the year] 487 (173-174 CE) [? offered ?- -] the son of Shalman, the son of Ialqut [this stele ? to] Bel

l. 1: The reading of the date is problematic. The first numeral strongly resembles the Palmyrene sign for five, which provides a date in the year 700, i.e. in the fourth century CE. This is, of course, impossible. Dura-Europos had been captured by the Sasanians over a century earlier, and we know that the city was deserted when the emperor Julian passed by it in 363 CE. Caquot suggests that the initial five has to be read as two bars of the numeral ten, which provides the date 487 (173-174 CE).[310] This date fits the style of the relief.[311]

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[309] P. Leriche, "Matériaux pour une réflexion renouvelée sur les sanctuaires de Doura-Europos", *Topoi* 7 (1997), 897-904; idem, "Tranchée sur la rue principale et fouille d'un sanctuaire et d'une maison d'îlot M5 à Doura-Europos", *Doura-Europos. Etudes* IV (ed. P. Leriche; Beirut 1997), 81-94.

[310] Bounni, "Nouveau bas-relief palmyrénien", 18.

[311] Cf. below, 278.

It is noteworthy that this date coincides with the dedication of the second *naos* of the Palmyrene sanctuary in the necropolis (above, no. 3).

l. 2: There are, of course, several words possible at the beginning of this line; *ʿbd*, *qrb*, *nṣb*.

šlmn, Shalman, is the name of an Arab deity, used as a personal name.[312] The Greek transcription Σαλάμ[α]νης as well as the Latin versions Salman, Salmanes, and Salmes, are attested frequently in Dura-Europos.[313] In Palmyra the name is common as well.[314] It likewise occurs in Hatrene, Nabatean, Safaitic and Syriac inscriptions.[315] The Greek transcription of the name is likewise common throughout Syria.[316]

ylqt, Ialqut, is an Arabic name, which is as yet only attested in Sabean inscriptions.[317] Consequently, Bounni suggests that the ancestor of the dedicant came from Yemen. This, however, pushes the evidence too far.[318]

l. 3: Most dedicatory inscriptions on reliefs explicitly identify the dedicated object, and this may have been the case in the present inscription as well. The editor proposes to restore *ṣlm*, but this word is never used for reliefs of a religious character. Instead I propose to restore *mṣb*.[319]

bl, Bel. The city god of Palmyra is in all likelihood the sole beneficiary of the relief. Palmyrene inscriptions invariably mention Bel first and it is certain that the name is the last word of the inscription.

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[312] Stark, *Personal Names*, 114

[313] Cumont, *Fouilles*, 380-381, no. 18 (temple of the Palmyrene gods, Roman period); idem, 412-413, no. 57 (6-7 BCE); idem, 439, no. 115 (temple of Atargatis); *TEAD* IV, 126, no. 250; 130, no. 259 (house of the merchant Nebuchelus, around the middle of the third century CE); idem, 168-170, no. 341 (bouleuterion of the temple of Artemis, Roman period); *TEAD* V, 18, no. 377 (graffito on the fortification wall, n.d.); *TEAD* VI, 294, no. 785 (house of the Roman scribes, Roman period); *TEAD PP* nos. 21 and 26 (both from the Roman period). For instances of the Latin name, see *TEAD PP*, index, 437-438.

[314] Stark, *Personal Names*, 51-52 (personal name) and 61 (divine name).

[315] Drijvers and Healy, *Old Syriac Inscriptions*, 55, with references.

[316] Sartre, *Bosra*, 236, with parallels.

[317] *CIS* IV, no. 226.

[318] A. Caquot, in: Bounni, "Nouveau bas-relief palmyrénien", 18.

[319] Above, note 49.

SCULPTURE

Pl. X. *Relief dedicated to Bel*

Relief with rounded top, made of local gypsum, H. 0. 44 m., W. 0. 52 m, that was found in the northern part of block M5. The arched stele was found in three pieces on the floor, 0. 40 m. from the centre of the south wall, close to its original location. Originally it was set in the small arcosolium in the centre of the south wall, about 0. 60 m. above the south bench. The Palmyrene inscription on the base dedicates the monument to Bel (above, no. 31). The relief is presently on display in the museum of Deir el Zor. Published: *CRAI* 1994, 11-18, fig. 1 (Bounni); P. Leriche, "Matériaux pour une réflexion renouvelée sur les sanctuaires de Doura-Europos", *Topoi* 7 (1997), 901-904, fig. 8.

In the centre of the relief stands a man holding two standards topped by small military figures. He is depicted frontally, his bare feet placed firmly upon the border of the relief. He is wearing the indigenous Palmyrene dress: a half length tunic with a heavy mass of material rolled around the hips covering the legs. The embroidered rims of the cloth converge in the centre and constitute a vertical fringe between the legs.[320] Over his shoulders he is a wearing a heavy embroidered mantle. He is clean shaven and a modius head-dress covers his hair. He is wearing a necklace with a circular medallion from which three pendants with globules at the end dangle. The medallion was originally set with a coloured stone. The figure is carrying two standards, on which there are small statues of military figures. Both hold a spear in their right, and a small round shield in their left hand. The head of the statue on the left-hand side is destroyed. The statue on the right-hand side wears a pointed helmet. It gives the impression of being seated.[321]

On the left-hand side of the relief is a small temple or *naos*, depicted in perspective. A figure is standing in the arched doorway of the building. The man is shown frontally, but his bare feet point to the right, as if leaving the building. Only the upper part of his right arm is depicted. Possibly it was raised in a gesture of greeting. He is wearing the same indigenous Palmyrene dress as the central figure. Instead of the elaborate mantle he is wearing the simple cloak that usually goes with this costume. He is bareheaded; his short hair is rendered in simple ringlets. Above the doorway is an arched fronton in which a figure is depicted enthroned between two animals, in all probability lions. In the figure's left hand is an upright torch. The type of dress cannot be discerned, but traces of a conical head-dress are still visible. Rays are incised in the background. On the upper part of the side wall of the building small circular and rectangular objects are depicted. They are probably to be identified as small votive plaques. The roof of the temple is made of merlons.

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[320] H. Seyrig, "Armes et costumes iraniens de Palmyre", *Syria* 18 (1937), 10-13; *PNO* 64 (with references to many instances of this dress on reliefs from the Palmyrène); E. Will, *Les Palmyréniens. La Venise des sables (Ier siècle avant-IIIème siècle après J.-C.)* (Paris 1992), 95-97. The same dress is attested on the relief representing the Arab deities Asheru and Shaᶜd from Dura-Europos, below, 324-325.

[321] Bounni, "Nouveau bas-relief palmyrénien", 13.

On the right-hand side of the relief a man is represented who is performing a sacrifice on the small altar to his right. The figure is standing frontally. The upper part of the body is damaged, as a consequence of which the arms are no longer visible. He is wearing a simple ***himation*** that falls to his feet, possibly shod in plain shoes. He is bareheaded.

The Palmyrene inscription on the raised border at the bottom of the plaque dedicates the relief to Bel, but Bel is probably not represented.[322] By analogy with similar representations the sacrificing figure can be identified as the dedicant of the relief. The identity of the man who stands in the entrance of the temple is more difficult to establish. He is not wearing the priestly modius and consequently we may exclude the possibility that he is a priest. Possibly he is a servant of the temple. The figure carrying the two standards who is represented on the central portion of the relief does wear the Palmyrene priestly modius, and consequently can be identified as a Palmyrene priest. In Palmyra priests are usually clad in a short-sleeved tunic and a hymation, but two reliefs from the temple of Bel picture priests in an indigenous costume, similar to the outfit worn by the priest on the Durene relief.[323] The elaborate mantle and the necklace of the priest on the Durene relief are unparalleled in the art of Palmyra. Similar necklaces are frequently worn by humans and gods on representations from the Arab city Hatra.[324] Here the medallions frequently contain the representation of a deity. A necklace that is more or less identical to the one worn by the priest on the relief is depicted on a fresco fragment from room 24 of the Dolicheneum in

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[322] Bounni, "Nouveau bas-relief palmyrénien", 13, identifies the central figure as Bel. However, the figure differs from iconography of Bel in Palmyra and elsewhere.

[323] On the dress of Palmyrene priests, see Stucky, "Prêtres Syriens I. Palmyre", 163-180. For the relief from the temple of Bel: *SP*, pls. 45 and 53.

[324] S. B. Downey, "The Jewelry of Hercules at Hatra", *AJA* 72 (1968), 211-217.

Dura-Europos.[325] Here the medallion contains the bust of a deity wearing a helmet.

By analogy with tesserae from Palmyra, the central figure can be identified as a priest of Arşu. Three tesserae from Palmyra picture a priest carrying two standards topped by small military figures.[326] The legends on these tesserae mention Arşu, from which it may be inferred that the ritual is related to the cult of this god. The Palmyrene tesserae provide no clue as to the identity of the two deities on the standards as these representations are extremely small and schematic. The most we can say is that the two gods are wearing a military outfit.[327] The relief from Dura-Europos is more detailed and hence provides valuable information on their identity. The god on the left is wearing a cuirass and carries a small round shield. These features tally with the traditional iconography of Arşu. The deity on the right standard is likewise wearing military costume and is carrying a shield. In contrast to her companion, this deity is shown enthroned. In the iconography of Palmyra the appearance of the goddess Allat tallies with these features. Like Arşu, Allat is of Arab origin. In all likelihood, therefore, the relief from Dura depicts a priest of Arşu carrying standards topped by statues of Arşu and Allat. The hypothesis that the priest on the Durene relief served the god Arşu accords well with the Arab dress he is wearing. Furthermore, the ancestors of the dedicant of the relief, Shalman and Ialqut, have typical Arab names, which accords well with the dedicant's preference for this Arab god.

The relief represents a priest of Arşu, but this does not necessarily imply that the small building represented on the relief has to be identified as a temple of this god. After all, the relief is dedicated to Bel instead of Arşu. The figure depicted in the fronton of this temple can be identified as the Gad of Tadmor, a goddess closely connected with the civic cult in the temple of Bel.[328] Combined with the dedicatory inscription, this suggests that the sanctuary represented on the Durene relief was dedicated to Bel, the city god of Palmyra. The relationship between Bel and Arşu is discussed in chapter III.

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[325] *TEAD* IX, 3, 112. None of these fragments were published in the excavation report. According to Brown in his report to the president of Yale in February 1936, about one hunderd fragments were found in the room flanking the western *naos*. The painting probably depicted a priest sacrificing in the presence of worshippers. Brown notes the style is late (third century CE). The fragment depicting the necklace is presently at Yale: YUAG 1936. 600 X-Y.

[326] *RTP* nos. 177, 178, 18. Two others, *RTP* nos. 175 and 181, picture the same cult implements on either side of a deity.

[327] It can be seen on *RTP* no. 175, that they are military deities. *RTP* no. 178 gives the impression that one of the statuettes is wearing a long dress. In the past it was frequently suggested that the deities on the standards are Arşu and Azizu respectively; M. Rostovtzeff, "The Caravan-Gods of Palmyra", *JRS* 22 (1932), 115; *RTP*, 192 (with question mark); R. du Mesnil du Buisson, "Les origines du panthéon palmyrénien", *MUSJ* 39 (1964), 173-174; Milik, *Dédicaces*, 22. More cautious are: J. Hoftijzer, *Religio Aramaica. Godsdienstige Verschijnselen in Aramese Teksten* (Leiden 1968), 41, note 93; Gawlikowski, "Dieux de Palmyre", 2622.

The style of the relief closely resembles the Mithraic relief that was dedicated in 170-171 CE.[329] Stylistically, therefore, it belongs to a large group of local sculptures characterized primarily by flatness and linearity, dating from the second half of the second century CE.[330] This accords well with the date 173-174 CE Caquot proposed to read in the dedicatory inscription (above, no. 31).

WALL PAINTING

On the bench along the south wall numerous polychrome fragments fragments of painted plaster were found which decorated the south wall during period IV. They depict the faces of several figures. The painting probably decorated the wall above the ***arcosolium*** which contained the small relief described above. The placement of these paintings reminds one of the so-called 'Otes painting' in room K of the temple of the Palmyrene gods.[331] Only one fragment has been published so far. Whereas the wall above the ***arcosolium*** was decorated with polychrome paintings, the remainder of the south wall was decorated with paintings outlined in red and black.

Head of a young bearless figure with helmet

Published: Leriche, "Matériaux pour une réflexion renouvelée sur les sanctuaires de Doura-Europos", 900-901, fig. 7.

The fragment depicts the head of a young beardless male figure. The head is slightly bent and faces almost full front. The figure is wearing a helmet provided with a neck guard and cheek guards. This type of helmet resembles the headwear used by Roman soldiers up till the middle of the third century CE.[332]

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[328] Chapter IV, 105-107.

[329] Pointed out by E. Will in his comments upon Bounni's, "Nouveau bas-relief palmyrénien", 18.

[330] Above, note 238.

[331] Below, 300-302.

[332] S. James, "Evidence from Dura-Europos for the Origins of Late Roman Helmets", *Syria* 63 (1986), 113.

The location of this painting above the *arcosolium* suggests the figure can be identified as a deity. In view of the Palmyrene character of the room, it is most plausible to assume we are dealing with a Palmyrene god. However, the identity of this god is difficult to establish. Only few Palmyrene gods are represented wearing a helmet. Among them is the goddess Allat-Athena, but the figure is definitely not female. The god Arṣu is also frequently represented wearing a helmet, but this helmet is clock-shaped and differs from the helmet worn by the figure under discussion. To my knowledge, there are no Palmyrene deities who are represented with a helmet similar to the one worn by the figure depicted on this fragment. The painting is of great quality and provides one of the best examples of Graeco-Roman painting from Dura-Europos. Stylistically, it resembles the painting of the goddess Aphrodite which was found in block L7 A.[333] Like the latter, the present painting probably dates from the third century CE.

On the east side of the bench along the south walls were found numerous fragments painted in red or black against a white background. They depict the lower parts of individuals of different size, wearing Parthian trousers, as well as garlands and buissons. They are in all probability to be identified as worshippers paying homage to the deities represented above the *arcosolium*.

BUILDING HISTORY

The building in the northern part of block M5, in which the relief and the paintings were found consists of one rectangular room, measuring 11. 15 x 8. 35 m., which was entered directly from the main street by a door in its northern wall. To the south is a large house, but apparently there was no connection between the two buildings.

Leriche distinguishes five stages in the history of this room.[334] Apart from the fact that the room was entered from the street by a door in the east of the northern façade, nothing is known about the first building. In the second period four columns were placed in the corners of the room. In all likelihood they supported a roof which surrounded an open court. During this period the original door was blocked up and replaced by a door situated west of the original one. A bench, about 1. 00 m. wide, surrounding the four walls of the room, in all likelihood dates back to this period.

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[333] *TEAD* VI, 279-282.

[334] Leriche, "Matériaux pour une réflexion", 897-904, fig. 5.

In the third period the door of the second period was blocked up and replaced by a door situated in the centre of the north façade. The room was entered by a stair descending three steps. In the ground in front of the lower step were six holes, which possibly contained a removable screen that prevented people in the street from looking in when the doors were open. A second door was constructed in the north end of the east wall. Consequently, the bench alongside this wall was removed, as was the bench against the northern wall. In between building period two and three the level of the street rose about 0. 30 m., from which it may be inferred that a considerable amount of time separated the two stages of construction.

The relief with the Palmyrene dedicatory inscription and the fragments of paintings described above, can be ascribed to the fourth phase. During this period the four columns were replaced by two square pillars, measuring 1. 00 x 1. 00 m., placed at 3. 00 m. distance of each other in the centre of the room. From these it may be inferred that contrary to the earlier structures the room was roofed. The main entrance of the north façade and the benches along the south and west walls, remained intact. On the axis of the main entrance, 1. 05 m. before the south wall, a small gypsum altar, measuring 0. 45 x 0. 45 m., was found. The altar was standing in front of a small *arcosolium*, about 2. 00 m. wide, placed in the centre of the south wall. Between the altar and the south wall the small bas relief was found lying on the floor. Originally, it must have been placed in the *arcosolium*, about 0. 60 m. above the bench running along the south wall. The *arcosolium* and the wall were decorated with paintings.

During the fifth and final period of its existence the room was converted into an arsenal. In all likelihood this was done shortly before the fall of Dura-Europos around the middle of the third century CE. When confiscated by the military, the relief and the paintings were covered by a layer of plaster, to which we owe their preservation.

The dating of the five building periods, as well as the identification of their function and ascription to a specific community are problematic. We have no clue as to the date of the first three buildings. The relief dedicated in 173 CE serves as a *terminus post quem* for the fourth building period. This room was still used shortly before the fall of the city around the middle of the third century CE, for it was undoubtedly around this time that the room was confiscated by the military and converted into an arsenal.

The function of the room during the first three stages of its existence is unclear. It follows from the altar, the bas-relief dedicated to Bel, the *arcosolium*, and the paintings, that the room served a religious function during the fourth period. However, it does not seem to have been a temple in the proper sense. The fact that it only consists of one room distinguishes it from most temples in Dura Europos, which consist of various rooms surrounding an open court. The closest parallel is provided by the northern complex of the temple of Zeus Kyrios; like the room in block M5 this was an independent complex that was entered directly from the street. Like the present building the annex to the temple of Zeus Kyrios was provided with benches, which suggests that it was an *andron*, a room used for meals by a religious association. The presence of a cult relief or paintings is not at all unusual in rooms of this kind in Dura-Europos. The *andron* dedicated to the god Aphlad and room K from the temple of the Palmyrene gods likewise contained religious imagery. The hypothesis that the room in block M5 was used for dining is substantiated by the many ceramics that were found here. If the room is indeed to be identified as *andron*, it is the largest room of its kind found in Dura so far.

The Palmyrene inscription as well as the subject matter of the small relief suggest that the room was used by a community of Palmyrenes during the fourth period of its existence. Its size suggests this was a community of considerable numbers. Unfortunately we have no way of knowing if it already served the needs of Palmyrenes during the first three stages of its construction.

PRIVATE HOUSE IN BLOCK M7
THE 'HOUSE OF THE BANQUET'

In the west of block M7, south of the Palmyrene gate, on the crossing between wall street and main street, a private house was found, one of the rooms of which was adorned with frescos. The house confirms to the usual type of private houses at Dura. W6, the room in which the frescos were found, was situated at the back of the court. Its dimensions, elaborate decoration, and the low plaster bench around its walls, show that this was the *diwan* of the house. The west wall and part of the south wall of this room were largely preserved thanks to their covering by the embankment of the fortification of the Palmyrene gate. Here three mural panels of 0. 65 m. high were found 1. 70 m. above the benches. Probably the band of paintings extended along the north and east wall, but since these walls lay outside the embankment they were completely destroyed. The panel on the south wall depicts a group of dining men who are accompanied by a woman, followed by a hunting scene. On the west wall were found two panels that depict a group of dining women and a group of dining men respectively. The figures on the panels are identified by dipinti in Greek and Palmyrene. Following the hunting scene on the south wall, close to the western corner, is painted an eight-line text in the Palmyrene script.

The following description starts with the major Palmyrene dipinto on the south wall. The description of the dipinti and the figures represented on the murals starts from the left side of the panel on the south wall, and proceeds clockwise to the panels on the western wall.

32. *PAT 1091* (revised reading)

Palmyrene dipinto written in vertical lines, above and to the right of the hunting scene of the panel on the south wall. The inscription was in poor condition when found; the letters were badly preserved and in part no longer legible. No photographs were made. The tracing that was made by Du Mesnil du Buisson is all that stands at our disposal. The frescos are presently at YUAG. However, the condition of the fresco has declined dramatically and consequently the reading cannot be verified. Published: *InvD*, 14-16, no. 25; *TEAD* VI, 167-169.

1. *dkyryn wbrykyn*
2. *ʾnšyʾ dṣyry[n]*
3. *tn⸢n⸣ qdm bl wyrḥbwl*
4. *wʿglbwl wʾrṣw*
5. *[w]dkyr[yn] ʾl⸢h⸣šmš*
6. *br ṣlt wt⸢y⸣[m]ʾ b⸢r⸣ yh[ybʾ]*
7. *dy ṣrw ṣwrtʾ h⸢d⸣[ʾ]*
8. *bṭb[t] šnt [5. 100] +5*

May be remembered and blessed the men who have been painted here, before Bel and Iarḫibol and Aglibol and Arṣu; and may be remembered Elahshamsh, the son of Ṣelat, and T[aim]a, the son of Iah[iba], who have painted this painting in (the month) Tebe[th] of the year 505 (194 CE)

l. 2: *dşyry[n]*, 'who have been painted'. Part. pass. pl.m. abs. *şwr*. The reading is not certain.[335]

l. 3: *tnn*, 'here', follows the reading proposed by *InvD*. *TEAD* proposes to read *tnh*. This word has the same meaning, but is never used in Palmyrene inscriptions.[336]

l. 5: *ʾlhšmš*, Elahshamsh, 'Shamash is god'. The present inscription provides the only instance of the name in Palmyrene inscriptions from Dura-Europos. The name has not been found in Palmyra either, but fits a Palmyrene context. Palmyrene *ʾlhšʾ* is probably an apocopation of *ʾlhšmš*. A parallel is provided by the common Palmyrene name *ʾlhbl*. The Greek equivalent, ʼΙλάσαμσος , is attested once in Dura-Europos. It is the name of the painter of the sacrifice scene on the south wall of the *pronaos* of the temple of the Palmyrene gods.[337] This painting depicts the members of an important Durene family, and dates from the end of the second or beginning of the third century CE.[338] Consequently, both inscriptions may well refer to the same artist.[339]

l. 6: *şlt*, Şelat, 'protection' (?).[340] As far as can be told from the tracing, there is no good reason for questioning this reading. However, the derivation and pronunciation of this name are uncertain.[341] Greek equivalents are Σελάθει, Σιλάθα, Σαλάτας.[342] Neither the Palmyrene nor the Greek forms of the name are attested elsewhere in Dura. The name does not occur in inscriptions from Palmyra either. The personal name *şlty* is attested in I Chron. 8, 20 and 12, 20, but a Jewish name is unlikely in the present context.[343]

tymʾ, Taima. Only the first and the last letter are discernible on Du Mesnil du Buisson's tracing. Du Mesnil du Buisson reads *tʾ[m]ʾ*, *TEAD tʾ[wm]*, the Jewish name Thomas, transcribed Θῶμας.[344] This name is not attested elsewhere in Dura, nor does it occur in Palmyra. In view of the uncertain reading of this name and the Palmyrene character of most other names, I propose to read *Tymʾ*, a common Palmyrene name that occurs elsewhere in Dura (above, nos. 8 and 54).

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[335] Cantineau, *Syria* 19 (1938), 164.

[336] *DNWSI*, "tnn" and "tnh".

[337] Cumont, *Fouilles*, 362, no. 6

[338] Cumont, *Fouilles*, 77-83, pls. XLIV-XLVII; Perkins, *Art of Dura-Eurôpos*, 41-42.

[339] Perkins, *Art of Dura-Europos*, 36, notes the similarity between the two names, but argues that the style of the paintings differ too much to be of the same hand. The argument of style is not decisive here, since the two paintings are of a very different character.

[340] *InvD*, 64; *TEAD* VI, 168.

[341] Cantineau, *Syria* 19 (1938), 164: «lecture fort contestable».

[342] Wuthnow, *Semitischen Menschennamen*, 163.

[343] Cf. Cantineau, *Syria* 19 (1938), 164, who is very sceptical with respect to Du Mesnil du Buisson's restorations of Jewish personal names in Palmyrene inscriptions from Dura-Europos.

[344] *InvD*, 65.

yh[ybʾ], Iahiba. ***InvD,*** followed by ***PAT,*** proposes to read ***bnyh***. This is interpreted by Du Mesnil du Buisson as the Jewish personal name Benayah.[345] However, a Jewish name is highly unlikely here. Instead, I follow the reading proposed by Torrey in *TEAD*. By analogy with the preceding ***ʾlhšmš br ṣlt***, it is most plausible to read ***br***, followed by a personal name. ***yh*** *[- -]* may be read as *yhybʾ*. This name perhaps occurs in a Palmyrene graffito from the ***pronaos*** of the temple of the Gaddê (above no. 21). The Greek form of the name, Ειαειβᾶς, is known from the Mithraic relief dated 170-171 CE, and belongs to an individual who is undoubtedly of Palmyrene origin (above, no. 29). If the proposed restoration is correct, the name favours the Palmyrene origin of the painter.

l. 7: ***hdʾ***, 'this', the strengthened form of the feminine demonstrative is otherwise unknown in Palmyrene, where the form *dʾ* is used. It is common in Syriac.

33-36. *TEAD VI, 170-171, nos. 690-693, pl. XLII, 1*

Four black dipinti accompany the figures represented on the panel on the south wall. From left to right:

33. *TEAD VI, no. 693*

Black dipinto below the border of the painting, beneath the second man seated on the left:

'Αδδοδάνα

'Αδδοδάνης, Addodanes. Apparently there were no traces of a Palmyrene inscription. 'Αδδουδάνης, attested in the same room (below, no. 37a), is a variant spelling of this name. The latter name is attested in a bilingual inscription from Palmyra, where it transcribes the name *ḥdwdn*.[346] The meaning of this name is uncertain. The Greek transcription suggests a qattul form. The name is probably to be derived from Aramaic *ḥadad*, Arabic *ḥadda*, 'be sharp' (intellect).[347] The 'house of the banquet' provides the only two instances of the name in Greek inscriptions from Dura-Europos. *ḥdwdn* is widely attested in Palmyra.[348]

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[345] *InvD*, 59.

[346] *PAT* no. 0260 (175 CE).

[347] Stark, ***Personal Names***, 88.

34 *TEAD VI, no. 694*
Black dipinto below the man seated to his right

ο[– –]βεος

There are no traces of a Palmyrene inscription.The name is perhaps to be restored as ο[ὐβ]βέος, a name transcribing Semitic Obaios (cf. below, no. 44).

35. *TEAD VI, no. 692*
Black dipinto below the naked boy:

ʼΕρως

36. *PAT 1090 = TEAD VI, no. 690*
Dipinto below the left arm of the hunter. Published: *InvD,* 14, no. 24.

Βωλαζέος *b[w]lḥzy*

bwlḥzy, is a verbal sentence with the perfect; 'Bol has seen'. The name is incorporating the element Bol, and therefore typical Palmyrene.[349] The present dipinto provides the only instance of the name in Dura-Europos.[350]

37 a-b *TEAD VI, 691 a and b*
Two graffiti in front of the horse ridden by the hunter represented on the fresco on the south panel on the west wall. No. 691 b is written as a continuation of line 2 of 691 a, but is obviously distinct. In contrast to the dipinti, these graffiti do not belong to the painting proper.

a:

ʼΑ[δδο]υδά[νης]

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[348] Stark, *Personal Names*, 20.

[349] Stark, *Personal Names*, 8 and 74; Milik, *Dédicaces*, 50.

[350] The parallel names, *bwlyʾ* and *bwlydʾ*, are attested in the military papyri from Dura-Europos in the Latin transcription Bolaeus and Boliadaeus, *TEAD PP*, index, 431.

ὤφλησθε
Μοκκίμῳ κα'
μέχρι Δεσίου

Addudanes owed Mokkimos 21 (denarii), the term of the payment being the month Daesius.

Personal memoranda of this sort are well known from graffiti from Dura-Europos.[351]

l. 1:'Αδδουδάνης ; The name of the borrower is the same as that of one of the banquueters (above, no. 33).

l. 2: Μόκκιμος; transcribes the Arabic name *mqymw*, Arabic act. part. IV of the common Semitic (except Akkadian) root *qwm* , 'he who causes to arise'.[352] The name is attested four times in Palmyrene inscriptions from Dura-Europos (below, nos. 61; 70; 71; 72). The Greek transcription Μόκιμος is atttested several times at Dura, whereas the Latin transcription Mocimus is frequent in the military papyri.[353] With one exception, all can be ascribed to the Palmyrene population of Dura.[354] The name is frequently attested in Palmyra and also common in Jewish, Nabatean, Hatrene and Syriac inscriptions.[355]

b:

μν(ησθῇ) [Ἰ]μηδαβοῦς

May [I]medabous be remembered

Ἰ]μηδαβοῦς. Transcribes the name *ʾmdbw*, 'the mother of his/ her father', attested twice in Palmyra.[356] The variant 'Ιμαβούας is attested in an inscription dated 7-6 BCE from the temple of Artemis.[357] Δάββους, a variant or abbreviated form of this name, is attested in the inscription dated 173 CE from the temple in the necropolis of Dura (above, no. 3). In Greek the name occurs throughout Syria and north Mesopotamia.[358]

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[351] They are especially frequent in the graffiti from the house of the merchant Nebuchelus, *TEAD* IV, 79-145 (*SEG* VII, nos. 381-430).

[352] Stark, *Personal Names*, 96.

[353] The Palmyrene priest Θέμης Μοκίμου, on the fresco depicting the sacrifice of the tribune Julius Terentius and his men, below, no. 49 b); *TEAD* II, 120, D 27 (Μοκίμος 'Ογᾶ στάτωρ τριβούνι), and idem, 130, D 64 (graffiti on the Palmyrene gate); *TEAD* VI, 249, no. 744 (on a jar, third century CE); *YCS* 1955, 175, no. 120 (on a sherd, third century CE); *TEAD PP*, no. 17 c (180 CE). On the Latin name, see *TEAD PP*, index, 436.

[354] Mokimos, the son of Nabou[-], *TEAD PP*, no. 17c (180 CE), is in all likelihood a Durene.

[355] Stark, *Personal Names*, 35-37 and 96; Abbadi, *Personennamen*, 125, for parallels and references.

[356] Stark, *Personal Names*, 5 and 69; Milik, *Dédicaces*, 324-325.

38-41. *TEAD VI, 170-171, nos. 687-689*

Black dipinti accompanying the female figures represented from left to right on the fresco on the central panel on the west wall. No plate was published of this part of the painting. Published: *InvD*, 16, no. 26; *PAT* no. 1092.

38. *TEAD VI, no. 689*

Black dipinto beneath the lower border of the panel, accompanying the seated female figure on the left:

Ζαβδιβῶν

According to the editors, the name was copied without indication of uncertainty. The present reading is without parallels in Dura. In view of the other Palmyrene names that occur in these dipinti, it is probably a misspelling for Ζαβδιβῶλ an abbreviated form of Ζαβδιβωλος,̇ the Greek transcription of the common Palmyrene name *zbdbwl*, 'gift of Bol', that is likewise attested in Dura (above, no. 1). However, in Palmyra as well as in Dura, this name is invariably carried by men. We know of no feminine counterpart. The *iota* or *èta* that the editors propose to reconstruct at the end is therefore most extraordinary. It is more probable that the name does not refer to the seated lady. Perhaps it belongs to someone depicted to her left, who has not been preserved.

39. *PAT no. 1092*

Black dipinto accompanying the lady seated to her right:

[Α]ρίθη *ʾhryʾ*

The reading of the Palmyrene is not certain. According to *TEAD* there is no Greek equivalent, whereas Du Mesnil du Buisson does read a Greek name.

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[357] Cumont, *Fouilles*, 412-413, no. 57.

[358] Feissel, Gascou and Teixidor, "Documents d'archives romains", 38.

There are no instances of this name attested in Palmyrene or Greek inscriptions from Dura-Europos. The name is not attested in Palmyra either. Neither the editors of *TEAD* nor Du Mesnil du Buisson propose an interpretation.

40. *TEAD VI, no. 688*
Black dipinto accompanying the seated female figure to the left:

θυμάλη *tmlʾ*

This name is not attested in Palmyrene or Greek inscriptions from Dura-Europos. Nor is it attested in Palmyra. Exact parallels are missing. In all likelihood it is a theophoric name of Arabic origin, composed with *tym,* 'servant'. Names of this kind are attested in Palmyrene, Hatrene, Nabatean, and north and south Arabian onomastics.[359] The second element of the name perhaps derives from *ʾlh*; in Safaitic inscriptions we encounter the name *tmlh*, in Nabatean *tymlhy* and *tymʾlhw*.[360] The Greek transcriptions of this name, θειμαλλας, θεμαλλας, θειμαλας, θαιμαλλας, θαιμαλας, are attested in Bosra and are frequent in the Hauran.[361] However, it is noteworthy that the first element of the name is never transcribed θυμ-, as in the inscription under discussion.

41. *TEAD VI, no. 687*
Accompanying the standing female figure (servant ?) on the right:

Βιθή *⸢btʾ⸣*

The reading of the Palmyrene is not certain. *InvD* proposes the reading *btʾ* or *btyʾ*; *TEAD* proposes *btʿʾ*. In view of the Greek equivalent, the reading *btʾ*, 'daughter' or 'servant', is most plausible. Names composed with the element *bt* are frequent in Palmyra, viz. *btʾ*, *bty* and *btʿʾ*.[362] The name *btʾ* is also attested in a Syriac inscription from Sumatar Harabesi.[363] In Dura and in

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[359] A. Caquot, "Sur l'onomastique religieuse de Palmyre", *Syria* 39 (1962), 239.
[360] Harding, *Pre-Islamic Arabian Names*, 138; Cantineau, *Nabatéen* vol. 2, 155.
[361] Sartre, *Bosra*, 204.
[362] Stark, *Personal Names*, 12-13, and 80-81.
[363] Drijvers and Healy, *Old Syriac Inscriptions*, 118-199, As 40.

Greek inscriptions from Syria feminine names containing the element βιθ or βαθ, are numerous.[364] However, an exact parallel is lacking.

42-47. *TEAD VI, 169-170, nos. 682-686, pl. XLII, 2*

Black dipinti accompanying the figures represented from left to right on the fresco on the north panel on the west wall. Published: *InvD*, 16, no. 27; *PAT* no. 1093.

42. *TEAD VI, no. 686*

Black dipinto accompanying the boy standing at the left-hand side of the painting:

Γά[δδος] *gdʾ*

gdʾ, designation of a divine being, which derives from the common Semitic root *gdd*, used as a personal name.[365] The restoration of the Greek name follows the common Greek transcription of this name.[366] The Aramaic name is attested on a vase found in the necropolis of Dura (below, no. 75). The Greek name Γαδδαῖος is attested once or twice in Dura[367] The Latin transcription Gaddes is known from the military papyri.[368] The name occurs nine times in inscriptions from Palmyra.[369] Parallels are attested in Nabatean, Safaitic and Hatrene onomastics.[370]

43. *TEAD VI, no. 682*

Black dipinto accompanying the first seated figure:

Βαράθη *brʿtʾ*

A common Palmyrene name, frequently attested in Durene inscriptions (cf *brʿth*, above, no. 5).

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[364] Caquot, "Sur l'onomastique", 240.

[365] Stark, *Personal Names*, 81.

[366] Wuthnow, *Semitischen Menschennamen*, 38.

[367] *TEAD* VI, 37, no. 617 (graffito from a private house in block E4, n.d.); The same name is probably to be restored in *YCS* 1955, no. 2 (temple of Atargatis, 37 CE).

[368] *TEAD PP*, 61 and index.

[369] Stark, *Personal Names*, 13.

[370] Nabatean *gd*: Cantineau, *Nabatéen*, vol. 2, 76; Safaitic *gdw*: Harding, *Pre-Islamic Arabian Names*, 154. Hatra: *gdʾ*: Abbadi, *Personennamen*, 94.

44. *TEAD VI, no. 683*

Black dipinto accompanying the figure seated to the right of the previous one:

’Οβεάν *ʾbyhn*

The origin and meaning of the name *ʾbyhn* are unknown.[371] The name is attested several times in Palmyra.[372] The transcription ’Οβεάν is not attested elsewhere in Dura, but the variants ’Οβαῖας, and ’Ουβαῖας occur several times.[373] The Latin military papyri list three individuals by the name of Obeanes. They are in all likelihood of Palmyrene descent.[374]

45. *TEAD VI, no. 684*

Black dipinto accompanying the third seated figure

μάλχος *mlkw*

A common name in all Semitic dialects in Syria, frequently attested in Dura and Palmyra (above, no. 1).

46. *TEAD VI, no. 685*

Black dipinto accompanying the boy approaching the couch:

Βεελέος *bʿly*

Βεελαῖος is a shortened form of a theophorous name with the divine name *bʿl*.[375] The present dipinto provides the sole instance of the name in Dura. In Palmyra the name is attested several times. It is one of the few Palmyrene names incorporating the name of the city god.[376] A possible variant of this name, *bly*, is attested in a Syriac inscription from Edessa.[377]

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[371] Stark, *Personal Names*, 63. J. Cantineau, “Textes funéraires palmyréniens”, *RB* 39 (1930), 526, infers from the transcription’Οβαῖανης in a Palmyrene bilingual text that *ʾbyhn* is a diminutive of the Arabic name *ʾbhn*.

[372] Stark, *Personal Names*, 1; Milik, *Dédicaces*, 230.

[373] *TEAD* II, 125, D 40 (Graffito on the Palmyrene gate, n.d.):’Οβαῖας Θεοζανδάου. *TEAD* VI, 172, no. 694; 241, no. 725; 243, no. 727.

[374] *TEAD PP*, index..

[375] Cantineau, *Nabatéen*, vol. 2, 73; Ryckmans, *Noms propres sud-sémitiques*, vol. 1, 54.

[376] Stark, *Personal Names*, 11.

[377] Drijvers and Healy, *Old Syriac Inscriptions*, 166-169, Am3 (3rd century CE).

47. *TEAD VI, no. 681*
Black dipinto to the right-hand side of the panel, outside the border of the painting:

μνησθῇ ὁ ζωγράφος

Translation: May the painter be remembered.

The Greek equivalent of lines 5-7 of the Palmyrene inscription from this room (above, no. 32).

WALL PAINTING

Pl. XI. *The banquet and hunting scene*
Panel on the south wall of room W 6, 1. 70 m. above the benches. H. 0. 65 m., W. 2. 50 m. Published: *TEAD* VI, 154-151, pl. XLII, 1; Rostovtzeff, "Dura and the Problem of Parthian Art", 215 and 273-279, figs. 71-72; Rostovtzeff, *Dura-Europos and its Art*, 94-95, pl. XVII; Perkins, *Art of Dura-Europos*, 65-67, fig. 26.

On the left-hand side are depicted six male figures reclining on a long couch. They are accompanied by a woman seated on a chair. Several figures are identified by accompanying dipinti (above, nos. 33-36). A festoon and a large rosette separate each figure from the next. The men all hold a bowl of wine in their left hand, and an oval pink object in their right hand. They all wear a long-sleeved chiton, in various colours. All have a short black beard and short dark hair, adorned by a pink fillet. To their left sits a woman on a cushioned chair, her head and torso depicted frontally, her legs pointing toward the couch. Her right hand is extended towards the couch, her left hand rests in her lap. She is wearing a red veil and *himation*, partly covered by a white chiton.

Above the ground level to the woman's left stands a small naked figure, identified by the dipinto below the border as Eros (above, no. 35). The god is leaning on the long inverted torch depicted under his left arm. His head rests on his left shoulder, the right leg crossed before the left. In the lowered left hand he holds a pink and black crown, adorned with white ribbons. Parts of his white wings are visible on either side of his body.

To the left of Eros is a horseman hunting three wild asses. The grey-black horse of the hunter is represented in flying gallop. The hunter is represented with shoulders and head full front. In his outstretched left hand he is holding a bow, which he strains with the arrow he is holding in his right. He is clad in white trousers, a pink long-sleeved tunic, and has short dark hair and a short beard. Two of the onagers are depicted in flying gallop, the third has fallen on the ground, wounded in the side by an arrow.

The women's banquet
Central panel on the west wall of room W 6, running 1. 70 m. above the benches. H. 0. 82 m. Published: *TEAD* VI, 149-151. No plate.

The drawing on the left-hand side of this panel was very much effaced, but apparently it pictured three dining ladies, flanked on either side by a standing servant. The figures were identified by accompanying dipinti (above, nos. 38-41). As in the previous panel, a festoon and a large rosette separated each figure from the next. On the left. various objects were depicted ; a small table, a jar and a high wide-mouthed bowl. Perhaps a servant was standing here, who served the two ladies seated on the couch to his left. Their heads and shoulders were depicted full front, their legs pointed to the left, towards a woman sitting on a cushioned chair. In pose and costume she closely resembled the lady represented on the south wall. To her left a veiled woman in a long dark green robe advanced towards her. It may be inferred from her standing position and the wine bowl in her upraised right hand that she was a servant.

Fig. 10. *The men's banquet*
North panel on the west wall of room W 6, running 1. 70 m. above the benchs. H. 0 .82 m. Published: *TEAD* VI, 147-151, pl. XLII, 2; Rostovtzeff, "Dura and the Problem of Parthian Art", 215 and 273-279, fig. 73; Perkins, *Art of Dura-Europos*, 65-67, fig. 25.

This panel is separated from the previous one by a border of about 0. 08 m., consisting of black, white, and red bands. It represents three men reclining on a couch, attended on either side by a standing servant. They are identified by accompanying dipinti (above, nos. 42-47). As in the two other panels, a festoon and a large rosette separate each figure from the next. On the left, a beardless youth wearing a dark green chiton that reaches to his knees is standing. In his outstretched right hand he holds a bowl of wine, in his left he carries a ladle. To his right ,three men recline on a couch, all in the same posture and with practically the same appearance. They closely resemble the men represented on the panel of the south wall. Their heads and bodies are depicted full front and their legs point to the right. Only the legs of the first figure are visible, those of the others are concealed by the cushions. The right knee is slightly raised, the left is bent and disappears behind the right leg. The men all hold a bowl of wine in their left hand; their right hand rests in their lap, apparently empty. They all wear a *himation* and a long-sleeved chiton, in various colours. All have a short black beard and short dark hair, adorned by a pink fillet. The scene is concluded by a youth who approaches the couch from the right. He is wearing a long-sleeved white chiton which falls to his knees, and sandals.

Fig. 13. *Representation of the evil eye*
Below the panel on the south wall, facing the entrance of the diwan, is a painting of the evil eye, H. 0. 11 m, W. 0. 26 m.. Published: *TEAD* VI, 155, pl. XLII, 3.

From the left the eye is attacked by a cock and a black snake, from the right presumably by an ibis. From below a scorpion fixes the eye with its claws. Above, a sword and two daggers or nails are fastened into the eye.

The evil eye also occurs on the tiles from the synagogue and in the temple of the Palmyrene gods.[378] Similar motifs have been found in Palmyra as well as in other parts of Syria. It may be inferred from its location opposite the doorway that it functioned as an apotropaic device. Its use in connection with doorways is well illustrated in 'the tomb of the three brothers' in Palmyra.[379]

TEMPLE OF THE PALMYRENE GODS

The temple of the Palmyrene gods is located in block J 3-5, in the north-west corner of the city wall. An inscription to Zeus Soter dated 50/ 51 CE gives a *terminus ante quem* for the existence of a cult structure, though the temple could be somewhat older. The original temple was very simple and consisted of a *naos* and two rooms built against the northern wall of the court. During the first two centuries CE a *pronaos* was constructed and the court of the temple was lined with a number of rooms built at various periods. The temple was still undergoing rebuilding in the third century CE.[380]

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[378] Cumont, *Fouilles*, 138; *TEAD Synagogue*, 48-49, figs. 11 and 12. The tiles from the synagogue were possibly likewise placed in the vicinity of the door.

[379] J.-B. Chabot, *Choix d'inscriptions de Palmyre* (Paris 1922), pl. XVI, 3. .

Cumont, who first excavated the temple, ascribed it to the Palmyrene community and labelled it the 'temple of the Palmyrene gods'.[381] However, there is no proof that Palmyrenes belonged to the clientele of this temple in the Parthian period. The individuals represented on the paintings which adorned the *naos* and the *pronaos* of the sanctuary can all be identified as members of local Durene families.[382] The same holds true for the dedicants of the inscriptions from this period. Bradford Welles proposed to change the name of the temple to the 'temple of Bel', and this name has been generally accepted.[383] Several Greek inscriptions dated in the Parthian period refer to Zeus.[384] Welles assumes that this Zeus was actually the god Bel.[385] The only possible proof in this respect is provided by the fragmentary painting at the back of the *naos*, on which a god clad in Parthian trousers is represented.[386] However, it does not follow from these Parthian trousers that this was a representation of the god Bel. Bel is by no means the only deitiy to wear this outfit. As far as can be inferred from the available evidence, the cult of Bel was confined primarily to people of Palmyrene origin. Given the fact that we have no proof that Palmyrenes visited the temple during the Parthian period, it is dubious that the Zeus mentioned in the inscriptions was identical with Bel. In view of the evidence, the Parthian temple is best called 'temple of Zeus'.

All material which unequivocally testifies to the cult of Palmyrene gods in this sanctuary dates from the third century CE, when the northern part of the city had been changed into a Roman military camp. In all likelihood, therefore, the Palmyrene deities are related to Palmyrene soldiers or people associated with them. For the Roman period Cumont's designation 'temple of the Palmyrene gods' is to be preferred over the denomination 'temple of Bel', since it is questionable whether Bel was the tutelary deity of the Roman temple. Bel is not mentioned in inscriptions and graffiti found in the *naos* and the *pronaos*. Furthermore, he is not depicted on the wall painting from the *pronaos* representing the Roman tribune Julius Terentius and his men. Bel is only represented on the so-called 'Otes-fresco' from room K. However, room K was a subsidiary chapel, and its cult does not necessarily correspond to the main cult of the temple. Although Palmyrene gods and people of Palmyrene origin figure prominently in inscriptions, graffiti and paintings dating from the Roman period, it ought to be stressed that the clientele of this temple was not confined to Palmyrenes and that Palmyrene deities were not the only gods who received a cult in this temple.[387]

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[380] Downey, *Mesopotamian Religious Architecture*, 105-110, fig. 47, for an overview of its history and references.

[381] Cumont, *Fouilles*, 29

[382] Cumont, *Fouilles*, 359-363, nos. 6-7.

[383] Rostovtzeff, *Dura-Europos and its Art*, 44 (who uses both names); Welles, "Gods of Dura-Europos", 63; Perkins, *Art of Dura-Europos*, 36; Downey, *Mesopotamian Religious Architecture*, 108.

[384] *TEAD* II, 91-93, H 4 (altar dedicated to Zeus Soter, 52 CE; cf. Dijkstra, *Life and Loyalty*, 264-265); Cumont, *Fouilles*, 355-356, no. 1 (dedication of a chamber and 'that which is above' to Zeus Megistos, dated 115-116 CE); *TEAD* II, 86-89, H. 2 (dedication of an altar to Zeus Megistos by the city in commemoration of an earthquake at 10 A.M. October 26/27 th, 160 CE).

[385] Welles, "Gods of Dura-Europos", 63.

[386] Cumont, *Fouilles*, 74-76, pls. XLII-XLIII.

ROOM K

Room K is situated in the north corner of the south side of the court. In his unpublished report of the temple of the Palmyrene gods, Pearson argues that this room was constructed shortly after 160 CE.[388] Originally, K was a simple chamber surrounded on three sides by low benches. Opposite the door, the plaster bench was interrupted by a gap for a central piece of furniture. On either side of this central feature, about 1. 20 m. above the bench, were two rectangular niches. During a second stage of construction this original furniture was replaced by an *aedicula*, consisting of a rubble barrel vault with side and front arches, supported by two columns. The façade of the *aedicula* projected higher in the form of a rectangular screen cut by the arch of the vault. The façade was decorated with the so-called 'Otes-fresco', representing the eunuch Otes sacrificing before Palmyrene deities.[389]

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[387] On the clientele of the temple, see Downey, ***Mesoptamian Religious Architecture***, 108-109.

[388] The present description is based upon Pearson's report, which is in the Dura archives of the Yale Univerisity Art Gallery. Cf. also Downey, ***Mesopotamian Religious Architecture***, 105-110, fig. 47.

[389] Cf. the Torah niche in the Synagogue, which is very similar.

48 a-d. *Cumont, Fouilles, 364-366, nos. 9a-d*
Dipinti on the mural painting from room K (below, 300-302). Published: *SEG* II, 778; Milik, *Dédicaces*, 125; P. Guyot, ***Eunuchen als Sklaven und Freigelassene in der griechisch-römischen Antike*** (SBGP 14; Stuttgart 1980), 217, no. 73.

a. Accompanying the person making an offering to the right of the altar:

'Οτῆς εὐνοῦχος
ὁ κτίσας τὴν ἐξέ
δραν
Otes, the eunuch, the founder of the room

l. 1: 'Οτῆς provides the sole instance of the name hitherto known. The origin and meaning of this name are unknown. Cumont proposes it is a name of Persian origin, which derives from 'Οτάνης, 'Οτάγης or 'Οτάσπης. Cumont's suggestion is followed by Rostovtzeff, Welles, Milik, and Gruyot. [390] According to Teixidor, 'Οτῆς is a variant of 'Οταίσαος or 'Οτάσος, a name attested in Bosra and the Hauran.[391] They are thought to transcribe Amonite *Ḥṭš*, Nabatean *Ḥtyšw*.[392]

εὐνοῦχος Otes is not identified by his patronym, but in his capacity as eunuch. Eunuchs are frequently attested throughout the ancient world in various functions. Well known are the priests who castrated themselves in honour of Atargatis or Kybele, the so-called *galli*. Although eunuch priests figured prominently in Atargatis' cult in Syria during the first centuries CE, there are no reasons to assume Otes falls in this category.[393] Otes is not represented with the Syrian goddess, but with a group of Palmyrene deities. There are no indications that eunuchs functioned as priests of Palmyrene gods. The omission of Otes' patronym does not prove that he had devoted himself to the Syrian goddess, as Rostovtzeff suggests.[394] It rather suggests he was or had been a slave.[395] Slaves or freedmen present a second category of eunuchs. Here we have to distinguish between eunuchs associated with royal courts and eunuchs who served in households of rich individuals. Eunuchs are attested at the court of the king of Parthia and there were royal functionaries in the provinces of the Parthian Empire.[396] The only other instance of an eunuch attested in Dura-Europos falls into this category. In 121 CE the Parthian eunuch Phraates, who belonged to the household of the Parthian *strategos* and *arabarches* of Mesopotamia and Parapotamia, was *arkapates*, a minor feudal lord, in the region of Paliga, a village lying some 70 kilometres up the river from Dura-Europos, just above the confluence with the Chabur.[397] The possibility that Otes was likewise a Parthian functionary has to be dismissed.[398] It follows from the style of the painting, the building history of room K, and the characterization of Otes' companion Iabsumsos as *bouleutès*, that Otes lived in the third century CE, that is at the time Dura-Europos was controlled by the Romans. From this it may be inferred that Otes served as eunuch in a private household. It is reasonable to assume he was the slave or freedman of the second sacrificing figure represented on the painting; the *bouleutès* Iabsumsos Abdaathes. Iabsumsos possibly was of Palmyrene origin (cf. below). As elsewhere in the Roman world eunuch slaves were common in Palmyra; it is known they were part of the household of Queen Zenobia and it may be assumed they likewise served the upper-class families in the city.[399] Frequently, such eunuchs were intimately related with the head of the household and some are known to have obtained considerable wealth.[400] This hypothesis therefore readily explains Otes' ability to finance the construction of room K. Slaves normally participated in the cult of the household.[401] The Palmyrene origin of Otes' (former) master would therefore readily explain his devotion for Palmyrene deities.

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[390] M. Rostovtzeff and C. B. Welles, "A Parchment Contract of Loan from Dura-Europos on the Euphrates", *YCS* 2 (1931), 56; Milik, *Dédicaces*, 125; Guyot, *Eunuchen*, 217.

[391] Teixidor, *BES* 1974, no 76. Cf. Sartre, *Bosra*, 224.

[392] Teixidor, *op. cit.*, following P. Bordreuil, "Inscriptions sigillaires ouest-sémitiques. I Epigraphie ammonite", *Syria* 50 (1973), 187-189.

[393] On the role of eunuch priests in the cult of the Syrian goddess, see P. Bilde, "Atargatis/ Dea Syria: Hellenization of her Cult in the Hellenistic-Roman Period?", ***Religion and Religious Practice in the Seleucid Kingdom*** (ed. P. Bilde et al., Esbjerg 1990), 174-181, with note 97 for references.

[394] Rostovtzeff and Welles, "Parchment Contract of Loan", 57. Cumont, *Fouilles*, 126, likewise favours the hypothesis Otes was an eunuch priest.

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[395] Guyot, *Eunuchen*, 104, note 71.

[396] Guyot, *Eunuchen*, 101.

[397] *TEAD PP* 20, 3. Cf. Guyot, *Eunuchen*, 220-221, no. 81.

[398] Contra Guyot, *Eunuchen*, 101 and 217.

[399] V. Zenob., 19.

[400] For the various functions of eunuch slaves in private households, see Gruyot, *Eunuchen*, 55-68.

[401] F. Bömer, *Untersuchungen über die Religion der Sklaven in Griechenland und Rom. I: Die wichtichsten Kulte und Religionen in Rom und im Lateinischen Westen* (2nd edition, Wiesbaden 1981), 57 and 181.

ll. 2-3: ἐξέδρα, 'hall or arcade furnished with recesses and seats'.[402] This word is attested only once in inscriptions from Dura. On the basis of Greek usage it can be assumed it designates a room used for ritual dining.[403] This interpretation is substantiated by the position of room K along the southern side of the temple court, the aedicula at the back of the room and the low benches along its walls. Other denominations of such rooms in inscriptions from Dura-Europos are ναός, οἶκος, and οἰκοδομή.[404]
κτίστης, 'founder'. Otes is identified as the founder of the ἐξέδρα and hence Cumont assumed he paid for its construction. However, from subsequent discoveries it became clear that room K was constructed around 160 CE, whereas the Otes fresco is dated to the third century CE. Consequently, we may assume that Otes financed the room's rebuilding, *viz.* the aedicula and the paintings which adorned it. The fact that Otes is characterized as the founder of the exedra is explained if we assume these alterations changed the room into an exedra.

b. Beneath the servant standing behind Otes

Γόρσακ

Γόρσακ, Gorsak, provides the sole instance of the name hitherto known. The origin and meaning of this name are unknown. Cumont proposes it is a name of Persian origin. His suggestion is followed by Gruyot. In all likelihood Gorsak was Otes' servant.

c. Accompanying the person making an offering standing to the left of the altar

'Ιάβσυμσος' Αβδαάθητος βουλευτής

Iabsumsos, (the son of) Abdaathes, the councillor

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[402] Liddell and Scott, 589.

[403] Cumont, *Fouilles*, 364-365, followed by Brown, *TEAD* VII-VIII, 156, and J. Starcky, "Autour d'une dédicace palmyrénienne à Šadrafa et à Duᶜanat", *Syria* 26 (1949), 46; Milik, *Dédicaces*, 125. In his unpublished report of this temple, Pearson identifies the exedra of the inscription with the aedicula, which was constructed after the room had been built. He is followed by Perkins, *Art of Dura-Europos*, 47. Although Pearson's reconstruction of the building history is correct, his identification of the aedicula as the ἐξέδρα is unlikely. This word invariably denotes a whole room.

[404] The inscriptions are listed by Brown, *TEAD* VII-VIII, 156-157.

'Ιάβσυμσος, Iabsumsos, transcribes the Aramaic name *yhbšmš*, 'Shamash has given', which is attested once more in Dura.[405] The name is not attested in Palmyra (but compare the related name *yhbʾ*), and is attested twice in Hatra.[406]

'Αβδαάθης, Abdaathes, transcribes the Aramaic name *ʿbdʿth or ʿbdʿtʾ*, 'servant of Athe'.[407] The present inscription provides the only instance of this name in inscriptions from Dura-Europos. The name is attested three times in Palmyra.[408] The sacrificant's name does not unequivocally prove he was of Palmyrene origin, but this is likely. If he was not, he and his son (below, no. 48d) are the only individuals attested in Dura so far who venerated Palmyrene deities.

βουλευτής The history of the *boulè* at Dura is little known. All the evidence being late, the institution was in all likelihood introduced at the beginning of the third century CE.[409] The occurrence of this title therefore suggests the painting dates from the third century CE, a date which is confirmed by its style (below, 302). Several names of Durene *bouleutai* are known. It may be inferred from these names that the *boulè* of Dura mainly consisted of people of Semitic nomenclature.[410] None of them, however, has a typical Palmyrene name. If Iabsumsos Abdaathes is indeed of Palmyrene origin, this immigrant managed to join the local elite.

d. Beneath the servant standing behind Iabsumsos

'Αβδαά(θ)ης 'Ιαβσύμσου
Abdaathes, (the son of) Iabsumsos

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[405] *TEAD* VII-VIII, 169, no. 873 (inscription from the temple of Adonis dated 175 CE: Θαισάμσος Ιαβσ(ύμσου) τοῦ ἐπικλητέντος Α(. . . . .) Ζαβιδάδου. On the vocalisation of the name of Shamash as συμ–, see Milik, *Dédicaces*, 75.

[406] Abbadi, *Personennamen*, 23 and 115.

[407] For names composed with the name of this goddess, see Teixidor, *Pantheon*, 75.

[408] Stark, *Personal Names*, 42 and 103.

[409] Chapter I, 15.

[410] Welles, "Population of Roman Dura", 270. In *TEAD PP*, nos. 27, 32, and 38, councillors appear as witnesses of documents.The *bouleutès* who signed as witness in DP 32 (254 CE) is Graeco-Macedonian in name: Asclepiodotus, the son of Athenodorus. The fathers of the councillors who signed as witnesses in DP no. 27 (ca. 225-240 CE) are Semitic and Roman in name. The first is the son of Rhahimnaeus. The father's name of the second is Antoninus. The *bouleutai* in Cumont, *Fouilles*, 408, no. 50 are called Goras, Orthonobazus (an Iranian name, very popular at Dura) and Zebidadados. The *bouleutès* from the odeum in the temple of Artemis, *TEAD* IV, 170, no. 343, is called Zoilus, the son of Zabdus. In addition, we have a list of names from the so-called 'Odeum' in the temple of Artemis. If this structure was indeed used by the *boulè*, they are perhaps members of the council which used the room: *TEAD* IV, 168-170, no. 341. Apart from Conon, all have Semitic (though not typically Palmyrene) names.

The son of the sacrificer; acting as servant

Pl. XII. *Otes sacrificing before five Palmyrene deities*
Wall painting, H. 1. 05 m., W. 3. 50 m., above the aedicula on the west wall of room K. The fresco deteriorated soon after it was discovered. The detailed description and the photographs published by Cumont are all that remain. Published: Cumont, *Fouilles*, 122-134, fig. 26, pls. LV-LVIII (idem, 38, on the architecture of the room); Perkins, *Art of Dura-Europos*, 45-47, fig. 13; Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra*, pl. XVIII; Gawlikowski, "Dieux de Palmyre", 2619.

The panel is divided into two parts. On the right-hand side two figures making offerings are represented on either side of a *thymiaterion*. They are standing on an outlined parallelogram, which may be intended as a podium. Both are accompanied by a servant boy. The four figures are identified by accompanying dipinti (above, no. 48 a-d). On the left-hand side are four military deities standing on a globe, accompanied by a fifth figure of whom only faint traces remain. Inscriptions by means of which these gods can be identified are missing, and their identification rests entirely upon their iconography. There is no architecture or landscape represented on the background. A series of garlands represented between the main figures are the only element of setting. They suggest that the event depicted takes place indoors, in all likelihood in a temple or chapel. The two figures making the offering and the deities are isocephalic. The gods are standing on a sphere, and hence are smaller than the two sacrificants. The servants of the sacrificants are represented above ground level, on a much smaller scale.

In the centre of the scene on the right-hand side a large portable incense burner is represented. Red flames are rising from the yellow *thymiaterion*, the shape of which is common in Dura-Europos in the third century CE. The figure making the offering on the right-hand side is identified by the accompanying dipinto as the eunuch Otes, the founder of the room (above, no. 48 a). Otes stands frontally. His right foot is standing firmly on the ground, his left foot points to the right. He holds his right hand over the *thymiaterion*, probably offering incense. In his left hand is an indistinct oval object, in all likelihood an incense box or a cup. Otes is wearing a white long-sleeved knee-length tunic, *himation*, and ankle-high shoes with red laces. He is clean shaven and has short black hair, adorned by a simple fillet. To the right of the altar a second sacrificant is standing, who is identified by a dipinto as the *bouleutès* Iabsumsos, the son of Abdaathes (above, no. 48 c). Like Otes, he stretches his right hand towards the incense burner. He reaches across his body to do so. In his left hand he is holding twigs. For the rest, his pose and clothing are the same as Otes'. Otes and Iabsumsos are both flanked by an acolyte, who are represented on a much smaller scale, above ground level. The boy flanking Otes is identified by a dipinto as Gorsak (above, no. 48 b), the boy flanking Iabsumsos is identified as his son Abdaathes (above, no. 48 d). The two boys are standing in a similar pose to Otes and Iabsumsos, with cult implements in their hands held out in the direction of the altar. The boy on the right-hand side holds a ladle (*cyathus*) in his right hand and a bowl (*ciborium*) in his left hand.The inside of the bowl is coloured red, indicating that it is filled with wine. The boy on the left holds a *ciborium* in his right hand, and a *patera* in his left hand. Both wear white short tunics with long sleeves, which are adorned with two horizontal red bands. Their legs are bare and they wear red boots. They have black close-cropped hair.

On the left-hand side are five deities standing in a row. Four are standing on a globe crossed by bands. The figure on the extreme left is almost obliterated. Only the lower part of a long dress remains, from which it may be inferred that originally a goddess was represented here. In contrast to her four companions, she is not standing on a globe. Beneath her feet is an outlined podium. According to Cumont, a shield was discernible on the ground to her left. Her four companions are all male, wear a cuirass on top of a short tunic, a clamys and ankle-high boots. They stand frontally, and hold a spear in their right hands. The upper parts of the two gods on the left-hand side have been destroyed. The boots, bare lower legs and the lower part of a mantle are all that remain of the god next to the goddess. The figure to his left is the only god wearing Parthian trousers under his cuirass. His cloak is longer and more elaborate than the one worn by the three other deities. In his left hand is a small globe, identical to the one on which he is standing. His head is obliterated. The figure to his left is the only god that is preserved completely. Apart from the bare legs and shorter mantle, the posture, costume and attributes of this god are the same as the previous one. It is the only god whose head is completely preserved. He has large staring eyes and is clean shaven. His simple rounded coiffure is rendered in black. Behind his head is an aureole, coloured pink. A crescent is below the nimbus. The figure to his left carries a small round shield instead of a globe in his left hand. Like his companion, the god is represented with a pink nimbus. The upper part of his head is largely obliterated. However, it can still be seen that he is beardless and wears a helmet.

The gods are not identified by inscriptions, but can be recognised by their costumes and attributes. In Dura the cuirass is confined to Palmyrene deities. The Parthian trousers worn beneath the cuirass by the third god from the left are typical of Bel.[411] This identification is substantiated by the moon god standing to his left, the common placement of Aglibol in representations of the triad of Bel. Hence the fragmentary figure of the military god standing to Bel's right is in all likelihood to be identified as Iarḫibol. The god to the left of Aglibol can be identified as Aŗsu on the basis of his helmet and small round shield. Both features are characteristic of the iconography of the god Arşu in Palmyra. The fragmentary figure of the goddess with the shield at the extreme left-hand side of the panel is probably Allat-Athena, the only Palmyrene goddess known to have been depicted in arms. Hence this fresco represents Bel, Iarḫibol and Aglibol with Arşu and a goddess, presumably Allat-Athena.

The composition is completely static. The figures are represented in rigid frontality and there is no suggestion of real movement. The human bodies are represented in a rather schematic way. No attempt is made at a naturalistic rendering of the clothing and there is hardly any shading of the flesh parts. Apart from the hair, rendered in black, all contours are boldly drawn with a brown line. Limited use is made of colours. Apart from yellow, red, and pink, white is much used. Stylistically, the Otes-painting closely resembles a number of paintings from Dura dated in the third century CE, such as the sacrifice of Julius Terentius and the paintings from the final Mithraeum.[412] The Otes-painting is in all likelihood to be dated in the third century as well. One of the sacrificants is a *bouleutès*, and this institution was only introduced in Dura at the beginning of the third century CE.[413]

PRONAOS

49 a-c. Pl. XII. *Cumont, Fouilles, 363-364, nos. 8 a-c*

One Latin and three Greek painted inscriptions identify figures represented on the painting on the right-hand section of the north wall of the *pronaos* of the temple of the Palmyrene gods, representing the sacrifice of a Roman tribune and his men to three military deities (below, 304-307). YUAG 1931. 386. Published: *SEG* II, 766-768.

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[411] H. Seyrig, "Hiérarchie des divinités de Palmyre", *Syria* 13 (1932), 194.

[412] *TEAD* VII-VIII, 209-210. For a thorough stylistic analysis: Perkins, *Art of Dura-Europos*, 114-126. Recently, J. Balty, "La peinture en Syrie", *AHS* II, 525-536.

[413] Perkins, *Art of Dura-Europos*, 47. Contra Brown, *TEAD* VII-VIII, who proposes a date around the middle of the second century CE.

a. Latin inscription to the left of the head of the Roman tribune:

> IUL. TERENTIUS TRIB.

> The tribune Julius Terentius is a well known figure at Dura. We know from the Greek funeral inscription found in a private house in block G7 that he was the tribune of the Cohors XX Palmyrenorum. In 239 CE he fell in battle, which furnishes a *terminus ante quem* for the painting.[414]

b. Greek inscription left of the head of the figure standing immediately to the rear of Terentius:

> Θέμης Μοκίμ(ου) ἱερεύς
>
> Themes, the son of Mokimos, priest

> Θέμης, Themes, transcribes the name *tymy*, a common name in Palmyrene onomastics, which is attested in a Palmyrene graffito from the temple preceding the temple of the Gaddê (above, no. 8).
> Μόκιμος, Mokimos, transcribes *mqymw*, which is common in Palmyrene onomastics and is attested frequently among the Palmyrene residents of Dura-Europos (above, no. 37 a). It follows from an *acta diurna* dated 239 CE, that Themes held an official position in the cohort.[415] Column II of this fragmentary text begins with the statement by the *ord(inatus) princeps* of the 'Order of the Day', to which obedience is sworn by him and his staff. Among the latter is a certain *Themes Mocimi DOS,* i.e. sacerdos. The priest is also mentioned in line 9 of the same column.

c. Greek inscriptions to the left of the heads of the two seated figures in the lower register:

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[414] *TEAD* IX, 1, 176-185, no. 939 (cf. *HTR* 24 (1941), 79-109).

[415] Already noted by Cumont, *Fouilles,* 113. Cf. *TEAD* IX, 1, 184, and *TEAD PP*, no. 89.

Τύχη Παλμύρων Τύχη Δούρας

Tyche of Palmyra. Tyche of Dura.

On the cult of Tyche see above, chapter IV.

Pl. XIII. *Julius Terentius, tribune of the* Cohors XX Palmyrenorum, *and his men sacrificing to three Palmyrene deities*

Panel on the right-hand section of the north wall of the *pronaos* of the temple of the Palmyrene gods, H. 1. 07 m., W. 1. 65 m.. The north wall was divided into registers of which only the lower two were preserved. The registers were marked off by heavy dark-red dividing lines into panels of irregular size. The fresco representing Julius Terentius covered two registers. YUAG 1931. 386. Published: F. Cumont, "Rapport sur une mission à Sâlihîyeh sur l'Euphrate", *CRAI* 1923, 27; pl. XLVIII; J. H. Breasted, *Oriental Forerunners of Byzantine Painting, First-Century Wall Paintings from the Fortress of Dura on the Middle Euphrates* (Chicago 1924), 95-100, pl. XXI-XXII; Cumont, *Fouilles*, 89-114, pls. XLIX-LI; Seyrig, "Hiérarchie des divinités", pl. XLIII (detail of the three deities); Rostovtzeff, *Dura-Europos and its Art*, 71-72; Perkins, *Art of Dura-Europos*, 42-45, fig. 12; Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra*, pl. XIX; Balty, "Peinture", 528, fig. 188 (printed reversed); Matheson, *An Obsession with Fortune*, cat. no. 32, fig. 23 (detail of left-hand side).

The panel is divided into two scenes. On the right-hand side the tribune Julius Terentius is performing a sacrifice on an altar, in the presence of members of his unit, the Cohors XX Palmyrenorum. The left-hand side is divided into two sections. In the upper section three military deities standing on round pedestals are represented. In the lower section are the Tyche of Dura and the Tyche of Palmyra.

Right of centre a Roman officer is represented. He is identified by the Latin inscription next to his head as the tribune Julius Terentius (above, no. 49a). His body is frontal, but his feet point to the left. With his right arm he reaches out to put incense on the burning *thymiaterion* to his left. In his left hand he is holding a rectangular object, in all likelihood a scroll with liturgical texts.[416] He wears a long-sleeved short white tunic which is fastened at the waist by a belt. At his left side is a sword. A white chlamys with red fringes at the hem is slung around his neck and falls behind his body. His lower legs and feet are bare, but perhaps he originally wore sandals. Julius Terentius has short black hair and a short black fringe beard.

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[416] Cumont, *Fouilles*, 92-93.

Behind Julius Terentius, occupying the entire right side of the panel, the members of his regiment are represented. They are massed together in two rows. The four men in the lower row are shown complete, the figures in the second row are only represented down to the waist. Heads of other men are depicted in the intervening spaces between the two rows of men, suggesting a large group of men. The soldiers are the same size as the tribune. All are depicted frontally. Their right hand is extended towards the left in a gesture of acclamation, their left hand rests upon the hilt of the swords on their left side. Apart from their yellow chlamys, their dress is similar to that of Julius Terentius. All have short black beards and most wear a moustache. Some attempt has been made to mark individual differences in the faces. The men are anonymous, except for the man at the extreme left of the upper row. He is identified by the Greek inscription to the left of his head as the priest Themes, the son of Mokimos (above, no. 49 b). To the right of the altar, facing Julius Terentius, a soldier holding a Roman *vexillum* is standing. The standard bearer is represented frontally, and wears the same costume as the other men. The military standard he holds with both hands extends to the full height of the panel. The vexillum is of the type normally found with the cavalry. The square banner is red, has a yellow border, and is fringed below. On the top of the pole is a golden ring or crown.

On the left-hand side of the panel, in the lower register, the Tyche of Dura and the Tyche of Palmyra are represented. Both are identified by Greek inscriptions. The two tutelary deities are separated by a large flower. The Tyche of Palmyra is represented on the left-hand side. She is depicted frontally, and sits on a throne. Her right hand rests on her right knee and holds an object which is no longer discernible. Her left hand rests on the head of a small lion standing at her side. Her right foot is placed on the shoulder of a small naked female, shown from the breast upwards, as if rising from the water. The woman stretches her left arm in a swimming motion; with her right hand she supports her right breast. She personifies the Efqa source in Palmyra. Tyche is clad in a white chiton and a white *himation*, edged by a yellow band. The *himation* covers the back of her head, on which she wears a mural crown. Behind her head is a nimbus. The dress and pose of the Tyche of Dura are identical to those of the Tyche of Palmyra. In contrast to her counterpart, the left hand of the city goddess of Dura rests on the head of the small naked male figure standing at her side. His identity is not known.[417] Below the rocks on which the Tyche of Dura sits there is the figure of a bearded man immersed above his middle in the water in which he is swimming. In all likelihood he personifies the river Euphrates. Both figures obviously copy the famous statue of the Tyche of Antioch by the Hellenistic sculptor Eutychides. Their attributes differ from the original, and thus provide them with a local flavour.[418]

In the upper register on the left-hand side of the panel three military figures standing on round pedestals are represented. It follows from these pedestals that they are meant to represent statues. This explains that they are slightly smaller than the figures of the soldiers. All three stand frontally and lean on the spears they hold in their upraised right hand. The two figures on the left shift their weight to their right leg, the figure on the right puts his weight on his left leg. All three wear a military cuirass over a sleeveless, short tunic, and a short military cloak, originally coloured purple. Apart from the high boots, their lower legs are bare. The heads are damaged, but all have a nimbus behind them, originally coloured yellow. The figure on the extreme left is in all likelihood bareheadeded. Below his nimbus is a crescent moon. He possibly holds a small round shield in his right hand. The figure in the centre is likewise bareheadeded. In his left hand he holds a small sphere. The figure on the extreme right is wearing a clock-shaped helmet, and carries a small round shield in his left hand.

The statues of the three military deities are certainly the main object of worship for Julius Terentius and his men. Unfortunately, they are not identified by accompanying inscriptions. Initially, Cumont identified them as Roman emperors.[419] In view of representations from Palmyra on which sinilar deities are depicted, and graffiti from the temple, he quickly revised his opinion. The main deities of Palmyra are frequently depicted wearing the Roman military outfit. Given the origin of the regiment performing the sacrifice, and the presence of the Tyche of Palmyra, the three are in all likelihood to be identified as Palmyrene gods.[420] The god on the extreme left is depicted with a crescent and hence probably represents Aglibol. This suggests that the god in the centre has to be identified as Iarḫibol. The small round shield and the clock shaped helmet of the third god suggest he is Arṣu.[421] This identification is substantiated by the graffito mentioning Iarḫibol, Aglibol and Reşou (i.e Arṣu), which was found close to the fresco (below, no. 50).

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[417] Cumont, *Fouilles*, 97, suggests he is perhaps to be identified as a personification of the young colony. This hypothesis is accepted by J. H. Breasted, *Oriental Forerunners*, 98. Alternatively, Cumont, *Fouilles*, 98 suggests that he may identified as an aquatic figure.

[418] Cf. the discussion above, Chapter IV, 103-104.

[419] Introduction to J. H. Breasted, *Oriental Forerunners*, 17.

[420] Breasted, *Oriental Forerunners*, 97, and Cumont, *Fouilles*, 106-107, proposes to identify the god in the centre as Bel or Baalshamin, flanked by Iarḥibol and Aglibol, i.e. the Palmyrene triad. Seyrig, "Hiérarchie des divinités", 194, rightly notes that it is unlikely that the central figure is Bel, and the god to his left is Iarḥibol. The god in the centre does not wear trousers, common in

Julius Terentius was in command of the Cohors XX Palmyrenorum until 239 CE, which provides a *terminus ante quem* for this painting.[422] This date accords well with the stylistic features of the painting. The drawing shows quick but rather heavy brushwork, which is typical of late-second and third century paintings, such as the Otes-fresco described above. As with the latter, the palette is sober with a great deal of white.

50. *PAT no. 1081*

Cumont, *Fouilles*, 366, no. 10 (Dussaud), who first published the text, states that it was written on the north wall of the *pronaos*, to the left of the panel representing the sacrifice of Julius Terentius and his men to three military deities. However, Du Mesnil du Buisson, *InvD*, 7, states that the numbers 50- 53 were inscribed on the northern column which separates the *naos* from the *pronaos*. Published: Cumont, *Fouilles*, 366, no. 10 (Dussaud); *InvD*, 7, no. 15.

dkyr mlkw br whblt	
qdm yrḥbwl w[. . . .]	
wrṣʾ w[ʿbd dkryn]	*wrṣʾ w[glr/d (?)t]*
ṭb wskrʾ lh[wn]	*tb wskrʾ lh[wn]*
b[knn ktb] (*InvD*)	*b[r nṣrtbl]* (*Fouilles*)

Bel's iconography, and the god to his left is wearing a helmet, an attribute which is not normally found with Iarḫibol. Alternatively, Seyrig proposes to identify the central deity as Iarḫibol, and the god to his left as Malakbel (but he notes that the latter identification is highly speculative). Balty, "Peinture", 528, also identifies the three gods as Aglibol, Iarḫibol and Malakbel. However, Malakbel is never represented wearing a helmet, whereas this is a common attribute of Arṣu.

[421] *TEAD* VII-VIII, 365; Gawlikowski, "Dieux de Palmyre", 2618-2619. R. du Mesnil du Buisson, *TMP*, 208-209, and idem, "Les origines du panthéon palmyrénien", *MUSJ* 39 (1964), 169-173., proposes the same identification, which he calls a triad of Iarḫibol. Du Mesnil is followed by E. Lukasiak, "Ikonografia Iarhibôla", *Studia Palmyrénskie* 5 (Warsaw 1974), 1-44. However, this painting is the only example of this supposed triad. A Palmyrene coin cited by Du Mesnil du Buisson as a second example, is based upon a wrong interpretation; the figure that is identified as Arṣu is clearly female.

[422] Above, note 414.

> May Maliku the son of Wahballat be remembered before Iarḥibol and [Aglibol] and Reṣu [*InvD*: 'and made this good memorial and reward for them in fixing the painting.' *Fouilles*: '..and Galdat. For good in reward of ...the son of Nouṣratbel.']

The readings proposed by Dussaud and Du Mesnil du Buisson differ substantially from line 3 onwards. It is impossible to decide between the two readings on the ground of either of the two tracings. Dussaud notices two hands and suggests that lines 4 and 5 are another text, whereas Du Mesnil du Buisson reads one text. Commenting upon Du Mesnil du Buisson's reading, Cantineau notes that it is peculiar that *ṭb* in line 4 is in the status absolutus, whereas *skrʾ* in the same line is in the emphatic state. For this reason Cantineau considers Du Mesnil du Buisson's reading of the last line extremely tentative.[423]

l. 1: *mlkw,* Maliku, is attested several times in Palmyrene, Greek, and Latin inscriptions in Dura, most of which can be ascribed to a Palmyrene context. The name is common in Palmyrene onomastics (above, no. 1).

whblt, Wahballat is attested once more in Dura in a Palmyrene graffito from the temple preceding the temple of the Gaddê (cf. above, no. 10). The Latin transcription is popular among Roman soldiers, most of whom were probably of Palmyrene origin. In all likelihood, therefore, the present graffito was made by a Palmyrene serving in the Roman army.

l. 3: *rṣʾ,* Reṣu. This spelling deviates from the usual spelling *ʾrṣw*. Cf. the writing *ʾrṣʾ*, Arṣa, in the dipinto on a vase from the necropolis (below, no. 75). Both spellings revert to the orthography *rḍw,* attested in Safaitic, Thamudic and Arabic inscriptions.[424]

51. *PAT no. 1082*

Graffito written in vertical lines beneath no. 50; severely damaged. Published: *InvD*, 9, no. 16.

> [....] *br bbʾ br* [...]

> [..] the son of Baba, the son of [....]

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[423] Cantineau, *Syria* 19 (1938), 164.

[424] Milik, *Dédicaces*, 49.

The personal name Baba is perhaps attested in a graffito from the temple of the Gaddê (above, no. 18), and occurs in a Palmyrene inscription on a relief found at the Palmyrene gate (below, no. 62).

52. *PAT no. 1115*

Graffito written in vertical lines, a little to the right of inscription 51. Published: *InvD*, 32, no. 49.

[.....] whblth
qdm yr[ḥybwl]

Wahballat before Iarḥibol

l. 1: ***whblth***, is in all likelihood is misspelling of ***whblt***, Wahballat, a common Palmyrene name which also occurs in no. 50, inscribed upon the same wall as the present graffito. In all likelihood the two graffiti were made by the same individual.

l. 2: ***yrḥybwl***, Iarḥibol. This restoration is plausible in view of the reference to this deity in graffito no. 50, above.

53. *PAT no. 1116*

Graffito found in the proximity of nos. 50-52. Published: *InvD*, 33, no. 50.

[d]kyr ʿyb

May Ayeb be remembered

ʿyb transcribes the name Αἰεβος.[425] The present inscription provides the only instance of the name in Palmyrene inscriptions from Dura-Europos.

54. *PAT no. 1083*

Graffito in the painting on the upper register of the north wall of the ***pronaos***. Published: *InvD*, 9, no. 17 (with tracing).

tymrṣu ḥ[r]tʾ
tymʾ

---

[425] Wuthnow, *Semitischen Menschennamen*, 156.

Taimarṣu, engraver (?), the son of Taime

l. 1: *tymrṣw*, Taimarsu, genitive compound, 'servant of Arṣu', presents the sole attestation of the name in Palmyrene inscriptions from Dura-Europos. Taimarṣu is frequently attested in Palmyra.[426]

ḥrtʾ Du Mesnil du Buisson proposes to translate 'engraver' (qal. part. act. of *ḥrt*), an unsure interpretation, unaccounted for in Palmyrene inscriptions.[427] *ḥrtʾ* is attested as a personal name in Palmyra, *viz.* the Babylonian goddess Ḥerta used as a personal name. However, the name is invariably carried by women.[428]

l. 2: *tymʾ*, Taime, 'servant', is of Arabic origin and common all over Syria and Mesopotamia. In Palmyrene the name is attested on a dipinto from the temple of the Gaddê (above, no. 8). The same name probably occurs on a dipinto from the "house of the banquet' (above, no. 32), and in two graffiti from tower 2 (below, nos. 70; 72).

55. *PAT no. 1117*

Graffito in Greek letters transcribing an Aramaic text from the south wall of the *pronaos*. Published: Cumont, *Fouilles*, 367-368, no. 11 (M. Levi della Vida); *InvD*, 33-34, no. 51; J. T. Milik, "Inscription araméenne en caractères grecs de Doura-Europos et dédicace grecque de Cordoue", *Syria* 44 (1967), 289-300; J. Teixidor, "BES no. 85", *Syria* 47 (1970), 375-377. *PAT* no. 1117 contains several errors.

θαρθηνγοβνινδααβα(ι)βιδσαλμα
βανισαναaβαρζακικη

The reading of the letters is fairly certain. However, the readings and translations proposed so far differ considerably. Levi della Vida proposes to read: θαρθην γοβνιν δααβα(ι) βιδ σαλμα βα νισαν αα Βαρζακικη, 'Two golden bars in the hand of the statue on the second Nisan. Barzaqiqe.' Du Mesnil du Buisson reads: θαρθην γοβνιν δααβα(ι) βιδ σαλμα βανι Σαναα βαρ Ζακικη: 'Two golden globes for the hand of the statue. Fabricated by Ṣanaᶜ, the son of Zaqiqe.' Milik reads θαρθην γοβνιν δααβ Αβιδσαλμα βα νισαν α′ α Βαρζακικη:

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[426] Stark, *Personal Names*, 55-56 and 117

[427] Cantineau, *Syria* 19 (1938), 164. Cf. *DNWSI*, "ḥrš".

[428] Stark, *Personal Names*, 23 and 90.

'Two golden cheeses; ^{c}Abdshalma, the first of Nisan, to Barzaqiqe.' Teixidor agrees with Milik's reading, but proposes to translate 'two golden molds', instead of 'two golden cheeses'. Milik's reading is the most plausible.

θαρθην, *trtyn*, 'two'.

γοβνιν All authors agree upon this reading, which they consider the plural of *gwbn*$^\supset$, known from Syiac in the sense of 'a cheese, a cake (of raisins, figs dates etc), a cheese-press or mold'.[429] However, their translations differ considerably. Levi della Vida's translation 'bar', and Du Mesnil du Buisson's 'globe', depart considerably from the meaning of the word in Syriac, and are inspired by their assumption that we are dealing with objects held by a statue. Milik's translation 'cheese' is gramatically correct, but, as Teixidor rightly remarks, a golden cheese is a strange offering. Teixidor's own hypothesis, that the word should mean 'mold' is plausible, although molds made of gold are unusual too.

'Αβιδσαλμα, transcribes the name *^{c}bdšlm*$^\supset$, 'servant of Shalma', which is common in Syrian and north Mesopotamian cities such as Palmyra, Hatra, and Edessa.[430] In Dura, the Latin transcriptions Abedsalmas and Abidsalmas are known from the military papyri, and are carried by soldiers of the twentieth Palmyrene cohort.[431] In view of the prominent presence of members of this cohort in the temple of the Palmyrene gods, it is reasonable to suppose the author of the present graffito also belonged to this regiment.[432]

Βαρζακικη, transcribes the name *brzqyq*$^\supset$, 'son of the spirits of the deceased', a name attested in Hatra.[433]

56. *Cumont, Fouilles, 369-372, no. 12*

Graffito on the south wall of the *naos*, on the so-called Conon-fresco. Presently at the National Museum of Damascus. Cumont notes that his reading is tentative. I have checked his reading against the original and came to the conclusion that his reading is the most plausible. I cannot suggest any improvements. Published: *SEG* II, 776.

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[429] *Syriac Dictionary*, 62.

[430] Instances are listed by Milik, "Inscription araméenne en caractères grecs de Doura-Europos", 292-294. In addition, the name is attested in a recently published parchment from the middle Euphrates region: Feissel, Gascou and Teixidor, "Documents d'archives romains", 24.

[431] *TEAD PP*, nos. 100 (twice; 214 CE); 101 (212 CE); 125 (235 CE); 97 (251 CE).

[432] Contra Milik, "Inscription araméenne en caractères grecs de Doura-Europos", 291, who identifies Abdshalma as a sheperd from the region of Dura. This apparently follows from Milik's assumption that Abdshalma offered two golden (goat's) cheeses to the deity of this temple, a hypothesis I find most unlikely.

[433] Abbadi, *Personennamen*, 89; Milik, "Inscription araméenne en caractères grecs de Doura-Europos", 298.

Εἰς τράχειλος   δακτυλίδ[ι]α δύω
Ἰαρεβώλῳ
μινίκια ἑπτά   ἄλλα τέσσερα ὁμοῦ εἰς τράχειλος
εἰς χεῖρα δεξιὰν
ἄλλα ἑπτά   ανκνα (?) ιδ' δακτυλίδια δύω
εἰς ἀρ[ισ]τερά[ν]
δὲ ἕτερα   'Αδαρ (?) ποτ(ήρια) ιε'
φίβλα ἕνα
ἀρκεῖ εἰς τρά
χειλος μινίκια
ἑπτὰ εἰς χῖρ ἕνα   αδ. τ χρ(υσᾶ) ?
φίβλα δακτυλύδια

'Αγλιβώλῳ
εἰς τράχειλος δύω
[κ]ειανὸν εἶς τράχει
λος ἕνα

For the neck   two rings
of Iarḫibol
seven rings (necklaces)   and four of the same for the neck
for the right hand (arm)
seven others   four.......two rings
for the left (arm)
(seven) others   (in the month) Adar (?) fifteen vessels
One fibula
rests for the
neck, seven rings (bracelets)
for one (each) hand (arm); ....of gold (?)
one fibula, rings

For Aglibol's
neck two (necklaces)
of blue stone for

the neck one

l. 1: Εἰς τράχειλος incorrect for εἰς τράχηλον.
l. 3: μινίκια, derives from μανιακής, 'necklace, torc'.[434] Here used in the sense of bangle, necklace, armlet.[435]
l. 8: φίβλα ἕνα, incorrect for φίβλα μία. ἕνα is no longer inflected (cf. also l. 11).
l. 11: χῖρ ἕνα, incorrect for χεῖρα μίαν.

The reading of *InvD*, 10-11, no. 18 (*PAT* no. 1084), a graffito on the north wall of the *pronaos*, which is perhaps to be read as a cultic calendar, is extremely tentative.[436] For this reason it is omitted from the present discussion.

57. *Cumont, Fouilles, 357-358, no. 3, pl CIX, 3*
Gypsum block, H. 0. 99 m., W. 0. 73 m., found reused in the *naos* of the sanctuary. The name of Alexander Severus (222-235 CE), whose memory was condemned after his death in 235 CE, was hammered out in antiquity. Published: F. Cumont, "Rapport sur une mission à Sâlihîyeh sur l'Euphrate", *CRAI* 1923, 18 (M. Cagnat).

Imp. Caes. M. Aurel[io Severo] Ạḷẹx̣ạṇḍṛọ
pio felici aug[usto divi Severii pii]
nep. divi Antonini [magni filio ponti]
fici max. trib. pote[statis VIIII] cos. iii [pp]
ẹṭ Ịụḷịạẹ Ạṿịṭạẹ Ṃạṃẹạẹ ạụgụṣṭạẹ
matri Aug. n. et c[astrorum sena-]
tus patriaeq. mili[tes coh. XX Palmy-]
renorum eq(ues) sag(itarii). Ṣẹṿẹṛịạṇạẹ Ạḷẹx̣ạṇ-
ḍṛịạṇạẹ devoti [numini ac maiest-
tati eorum].

For Imperator Caesar Marcus Aureli[us Severus] Alexander,
the pious, felicitous, Augustus; grand son of the divine pious Severus;
[son] of the divine, [great] Antoninus; [Pontifex]

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[434] Liddell and Scott, 1079: worn of gold by Persians and Gauls.

[435] Liddell and Scott, suppl., 100.

[436] Cantineau, *Syria* 19 (1938), 164: «la lecture paraît fort difficile, et, par conséquent, conjecturale».

Maximus; during the year of his ninth ***tribunicia potestas*** and his third consulship (230 CE); [Father of our nation];
and for the Empress Julia Avita Mamea
mother of our Augustus, c[astrum, senate]
and country. The soldiers of mounted archers of the [twentieth Palmyrene cohort]
dedicated (this) to the divinity and majesty of (the house of) Severus Alexander.

58. *TEAD II, 90-91, fig. 3*

Inscription on a gypsum altar. Found ***in situ***, just beside the entrance of the 'tower of the Palmyrene archers'.

θέῳ Ἰαρ
ειβώλῳ
Σκειβώνι
ος Μουκια
νὸς χιλίαρχος
ἐποίησην
κατα κέλευσιν

To the god Iarḥibol. Skeibonios Moukianos, the tribune, made this on command (of the god).

ll. 1-2: 'Ιαρειβῶλος, Iarḥibol, transcribes *Yrḥbwl*, the name of an indigenous Palmyrene god. The present transcription provides the only instance from Dura-Europos in which the transcription is almost identical with 'Ιαριβῶλος, the usual spelling in Palmyra.[437]

ll. 3-4: Σκειβώνιος, Skeibonios, is probably a misspelling of Σκρειβώνιος, which transcribes the common Latin name Scribonius. The editors read Σκρειβώνιος, but a *rho* is not visible on the photograph. The present inscription provides the only instance of the Greek name in Dura-Europos.

ll. 4-5: Μουκιανός, Moukianos, transcribes the Latin name Mucianus, attested in the military parchments and papyri from Dura. Several Greek instances of the name are known, all dated in the Roman period.[438]

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[437] Milik, *Dédicaces*, 44.

[438] *TEAD* V, 169, no. 502 (graffito from the temple of Azzanathkona).

MILITARY CLERICAL OFFICE IN THE TEMPLE OF AZZANATHKONA

The temple dedicated to the goddess Artemis-Azzanathkona is located in block E7, against the north city wall near the temple of the Palmyrene gods.[439] Around the beginning of the third century CE, the northern part of the town was converted into a military camp. At this time the rooms W 12-17, which originally belonged to the temple, were cut off from the temple court by cross-walls and were provided with a separate entrance on street D.[440] With the rebuilding these rooms were relegated to the use of auxiliary troops of the garrison.

Rooms W 15 and W 16 functioned as a vestibule, whereas room W 17 seemed to have been a triclinium or resting room.[441] Most finds originate from rooms W 12-14, three rooms located against the north city walls.[442] They functioned as a military clerical office which was used by auxiliary troops of the garrison. In rooms W 13 many military papyri and parchments were found.[443] From this it follows that rooms W 12 and W 14 were the office rooms of military scribes. They were in all likelihood responsible for the many graffiti and pen and ink drawings which have been found on the walls of W 14.[444]

It is evident from the nature and the number of the texts found in W 13 that this constituted an archive of the Cohors XX Palmyrenorum.[445] The ink drawing from room 14, representing the Palmyrene god Iarḫibol, obviously has to be understood in the light of this Palmyrene cohort. However, the complex was not exclusively used by the Palmyrene regiment.[446] Consequently not all finds from these rooms can be ascribed to the Cohors XX Palmyreno*rum*. Many of the personal names and ink drawings from these rooms are not typically Palmyrene and it is impossible to ascribe them to the members of a specific Roman regiment. Moreover, we have to reckon with the possibility that not all soldiers of the Cohors XX Palmyrenorum actually came from Palmyra. For this reason we confine ourselves to a discussion of the drawing representing Iarḫibol. However, it should be kept in mind that the other drawings and graffiti were at least partly made by Palmyrenes. As such they testify to the romanization of the Palmyrene military.

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[439] *TEAD* V, 131-200, esp. 131-136; Downey, ***Mesopotamian Religious Architecture***, 99-101, figs. 44 and 45.

[440] *TEAD* V, 136. Room W 12 was constructed in 153 CE: *TEAD* V, 151-152, no. 468. The cross-walls were discovered during the excavations of 1935-36 or 1936-37. This find was never published in the excavation reports, and is not mentioned by Downey, ***Mesopotamian Religious Architecture***, 99-101. It is mentioned by R. O. Fink, A. S. Hoey and W. F. Snyder, "The Feriale Duranum", *YCS* 7 (1940), 11-12, note 2, who base their account on oral information provided by Frank Brown.

[441] *TEAD* V, 168-170.

[442] *TEAD* V, 151-168.

[443] *TEAD* V, 166. Cf. *TEAD PP*, 3 and 26, for the character of the documents found in this room.

[444] *TEAD* V, 153-158, pls. XII, 2; XXXV 3-4.

[445] *TEAD PP*, 3-4, fig. 1, and 36.

[446] The Second Ulpian cohort: *TEAD* V, 226-229, no. 561 (room W 12); The Fourth Scythian legion or the Third Cyrenaic legion: *TEAD* V, 161-162, no. 483 (room W 14).

Pl. XIV. *Ink drawing representing a sacrifice to Iarḫibol*
59 a-d. *TEAD V*, 155-156, nos 470-474
Drawing in the middle of the west wall of room W 14. W. 0. 60 m., H. 0. 32 m.. Painted inscriptions as well as graffiti identify several of the figures represented. For reasons of clarity, the painting and these inscriptions are discussed together. YUAG. Published: *TEAD* V, 153-156, pl. XXXVI, 1-3; M. Rostovtzeff, "Dura and the Problem of Parthian Art", 249-252, fig. 57; M. Rostovtzeff, "Res Gestae Divi Saporis and Dura", *Berytus* 8 (1943), 58-59, fig. 2; B. Goldman, "A Dura-Europos Dipinto and Syrian Frontality," *OA* 24 (1985), 279-300, pl. XVIII.

In the centre a god with rayed head is standing frontally on a pedestal composed of three steps. The three steps of the pedestal all bear painted inscriptions, which identify the god as Iarḫibol.[447] The inscription on the top tier is illegible. On the second step we read Μνη[σ]θῇ . . βος 'Ιαράβωλ Μάλχα, 'May [personal name] be remembered before Iarḫibol, the King'.[448] The inscription on the lowest step is very faint. Possibly the name of the god was repeated twice in this line.[449] In his raised right hand Iarḫibol holds a spear or sceptre and two small palm leaves. In his left hand is a small globe or sphere. His weight rests on his right foot, drawn in profile, his left foot points to the right. The god wears a cuirass on top of a short tunic, a chlamys embroidered with star-like ornaments, and high laced high boots. Unfortunately, his face is largely effaced. Around the god's head is a nimbus and a solar crown of seven rays and between the rays seven wavy lines.

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[447] *TEAD* V, 155, no. 473; Rostovtzeff, "Dura and the Problem of Parthian Art", 249; Milik, *Dédicaces*, 44.

[448] Alternatively, Milik, *Dédicaces*, 45, proposes to read personal names in line 2: 'Ιαραβῶλ[ης], Μάλχα. As he notes himself, Μάλχα is hardly attested as a personal name. The name *mlkʾ* is normally transcribed Μαλχῆς. In all likelihood, therefore, Μάλχα, is an epithet of the god Iarḫibol, transcribing the Aramaic word *mlk*, 'king'. According to Hopkins, *TEAD* V, 156, Μάλχα refers to the Palmyrene god Malakbel. He consequently proposes to read in line 2 the names of two Palmyrene sun gods, Iarḫibol and Malakbel, which he considers to be titles of one sun god. This hypothesis has to be dismissed. The name Malakbel is transcribed in Greek Μαλαχβήλ, which favours the etymology *mlʾk bl*, 'messenger of Bel', instead of *mlkʾ bl*, 'Bel is king'. Cf. above, Chapter VI, note 6. There is no evidence to support the idea that Iarḫibol and Malakbel were identified with each other. As far as can be inferred from the evidence, the single Palmyrene sun god postulated by Hopkins never existed. Instead, we have to distinguish at least three solar deities of different origin: Iarḫibol, Shamash, and, to a lesser degree, Malakbel. The solar deities Iarḫibol and Malakbel were both very popular with Palmyrene soldiers. Cf. the discussion in chapter VI, 181-189.

[449] Rostovtzeff proposes to read 'Ιαραβῶλ ΛΟΥΛ ΙΑΖΑΠΩ, whereas Hopkins reads ΙΜΑΡΟΥ ΜΟΥΛ Ιαραβω[ληλος]. Alternatively, Milik, *Dédicaces*, 44, proposes to read lines 2 and 3 as one sentence: Μν(ησθῇ) ἡ σ[υ]νοδος Ιαραβῶλ μάλχα ιμ 'Αβουλαουλ Ιαραβω(λης), 'May the

To the right a winged Victory flies towards the god's head. She holds a crown in her outstretched right hand and a palm branch in the left. Her feet are poised on a small globe. Below the Victory, at the extreme right is a man offering on a *thymiaterion*. He is identified by the painted inscription above his head as ’Α[ρτεμί]δωρος σημιαφόρος, ‘Artemidoros, the standard bearer’.[450] The figure is drawn in a different, cruder style and is in all probability a later addition. Beneath his feet is written in cursive Latin the name SALVIANUS.[451] Since all other painted inscriptions are in Greek, it was probably added later. From the left an eagle comes flying, holding a crown in its beak. Beneath the eagle, to the left of the deity, a second sacrificant is standing beside a *thymiaterion*. He is identified by the inscription above his head as ‘Ηλιόδω(ρος), ‘Heliodoros’.[452] Across it was later scratched in large letters the word νεικάτωρ, ‘victor’[453] In all probability this title refers to the god Iarḫibol, and not the sacrificant. Heliodoros stands frontally, his feet in the same profile and tiptoe-pose as the deity. His right hand is stretched across his body to the altar. He is wearing the uniform of a Roman officer; a long-sleeved short tunic with fringe, a *paludamentum*, and high boots. A shoulder-strap is attached to the right side of the belt to support the sword. He is bareheadeded, has short hair, a short beard and a moustache. He is strikingly similar to the tribune Julius Terentius in the fresco of the *pronaos* of the temple of the Palmyrene gods, and certainly represents an officer of the Roman army. Left of the sacrificant a boy holding a palm branch in his right, and a box in his left hand, advances to the right. He reminds one of the acolytes in the painting representing the the sacrifice of Otes, and undoubtedly is a servant.

Behind and to the left of the sacrificant a horseman is advancing towards the god. The rider is dressed in the Parthian or early Sasanian fashion, which was adapted with slight modifications by Palmyrene nobles: a girded long-sleeved

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association of Iarḫibol the King be remembered, as well as Abulaᶜul, the son of Iarḫibole’. However, as Milik, *op. cit.*, 45, concedes, this reading is very hypothetical.

[450] *TEAD* V, 155, no. 470.

[451] *TEAD* V, 155, no. 471.

[452] *TEAD* V, 155, no. 472.

[453] *TEAD* V, 155, no. 474.

kaftan, a wide cloak which floats behind him, wide trousers with an ornamented strap in the middle, and boots. In his left hand he holds a shield, partly visible behind the horse's neck. Along the saddle is a quiver full of arrows. The head of the horseman is obliterated, but was apparently represented full front. The panoply of the horse is Parthian or Sassanian, a fashion which also taken over by the Palmyrenes. Between the feet of the horse are small circular objects in three rows. Unfortunately, the figure is not identified by an inscription. Given his clothing and the presence of Iarḥibol, he probably has to be identified as a Palmyrene noble. Rostovtzeff tentatively identifies the horseman as an oriental general, viz. the Palmyrene King Odenath. He argues that the scene represents a sacrifice offered to Iarḥibol in commemoration of Odenath's great victory over the Parthians in 253 CE.[454] However, it is not certain that the mounted figure represents a Palmyrene general, let alone that there is any reason to assume that he is to be identified as Odenath.

TEMPLE OF ZEUS MEGISTOS

The temple of Zeus Megistos is located on the acropolis, in block C 4. It is one of the few temples in Dura which has remains that date back to the Hellenistic period, and it was one of the most prominent Durene sanctuaries until at least the end of the second century CE.[455] Unfortunately, the results of the excavations were not published systematically, and consequently much about its history and clientele remain unclear.[456] This holds true especially for the last period of its existence, from about 160 CE until the fall of the city around the middle of the third century CE. The temple was probably severely damaged during the earthquake of 160 CE, as a consequence of which it needed rebuilding. After 160 CE, the ground plan of the temple became extremely complex.[457] A second temple court, two new *naoi* and a number of subsidiary chapels or assembly rooms were added to the original complex. In all likelihood this reflects the arrival of new groups of worshippers, that possibly introduced new deities.

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[454] Rostovtzeff, "Dura and the Problem of Parthian Art", 251; idem, "Res Gestae Divi Saporum", 59. This painting is adduced by Rostovtzeff in favour of the hypothesis that Dura was briefly occupied by the Sasanians in 253 CE, but quickly fell back into Roman hands for the last couple of years before Shapur finally eliminated it. Neither this painting, nor the other materials cited by Rostovtzeff, provide credible support for this hypothesis: S. James, "Dura-Europos and the Chronology of Syria in the 250s AD", *Chiron* 15 (1985), 116.

[455] On the importance of this sanctuary in the Hellenistic, Parthian, and early Roman period, see Chapter IV, 114-115.

[456] Much of its history remains unclear, since the results of the excavations were never published by Frank Brown, the archaeologist in charge of its excavation during the years 1935-1936. Brown's field notes were first published by S. B. Downey, *Mesopotamian Religious Architecture*, 79-86, figs. 32-38 (Hellenistic period) and 92-96, figs. 41-42 (Parthian and Roman period). Recently, Susan Downey attempted to verify and correct Brown's results by re-excavating parts of the temple: "Two Buildings at Dura-Europos and the Early History of the Iwan", *Mesopotamia* 22 (1985), 111-129; idem, "New Soundings in the Temple of Zeus Megistos at Dura-Europos", *Mesopotamia* 28 (1993), 169-193. Various finds from this temple have been published in different publications, but the record is far from complete.

Whether the sanctuary retained its civic importance during the last period of its existence we do not know. However, the radical new ground plan does suggest that major changes occurred during this period. There is some evidence from which it may be inferred that soldiers visited the temple, and they may have had a profound influence on the deities that were worshipped here.[458] Apart from the Palmyrene relief representing Arṣu that is described below, representations were found of Heracles and of various nimbated deities wearing the indigenous costume of the desert people.[459] Heracles and solar deities were very popular among soldiers, and it is reasonable to suppose that these gods are related to the military. In addition, a life-sized head of a bearded god wearing a polos was found in a subsidiary naos.[460] The head is very similar to that of Baalshamin on the relief from the sanctuary of Zeus Kyrios-Baalshamin discussed above, and possibly the god has to be identified as such.[461] In view of the Palmyrene presence in this temple and the large number of Palmyrene soldiers who were stationed in Dura-Europos, it is possible that some of these deities have a Palmyrene background. Unfortunately, however, this is bound to remain mere speculation. For this reason these reliefs are omitted from the present discussion.

INSCRIPTION

59. Pl. XV. *PAT 1113*

Palmyrene inscription cut on the left side and top of a rectangular stele representing Arṣu (below, 321). YUAG 1938. 5311. Published: *InvD,* 28-30, no.

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[457] Downey, *Mesopotamian Religious Architecture*, 93-96, fig. 42.

[458] Several graffiti from this temple contain personal names which are best explained as born by soldiers: YCS 1955, 142-144, nos. 7, 8.11, 12

[459] *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 70-72, nos. 52-53 (nimbate and radiate deities); *TEAD Heracles*, 21, no. 7, and 57-61.

[460] *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 66-67, no. 50.

[461] *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 209-210, proposes to identify the deity as Zeus Megistos, the tutelary deity of the sanctuary. I cannot agree with this. The head was found in a subsidiary naos, whereas the fragments of another lifesized statue of a god were found in the naos itself.

47; *YCS* 1955, 138-139, no. 5 (Ingholt); *TMP*, 229 and 234; J. Starcky, *Syria* 44 (1957), 366; *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 54; Dijkstra, *Life and Loyalty*, 260-261.

ʾrṣw wmṭyʾ ʿbd ʿgʾ glpʾ lḥy brh

Oga the sculptor has made Arṣu the camel-rider for the life of his son

mṭyʾ, ‘camel-rider’, status emphaticus of *mṭy*, meaning in Arabic ‘rider on a camel’, follows the reading proposed by Ingholt in *YCS*. Inholt argues that the preposition *w* has the same meaning as the Greek expression ὁ καί, a sense for which we have one parallel in Palmyra. According to Starcky, this interpretation is too subtle. He therefore does not consider *mṭyʾ* an epithet of Arṣu, but instead suggests it is the name of another deity, not represented on the relief.[462] However, a deity by this name is not known. Since Arṣu is frequently associated with a camel, I prefer Ingholt's interpretation.[463]

lḥy is a shortened form of the expression *lḥyy*, ‘for the life of’ which is attested frequently in inscriptions from Palmyra, Hatra and Nabatea.[464]

ʿgʾ, Oga, a name of unclear derivation which is very common in Palmyra and Hatra.[465] The present inscription provides the sole instance of the name in Palmyrene inscriptions from Dura-Europos. The Greek transcription ʽΟγα occurs once in a graffito on the Palmyrene gate.[466] The Latin name Ogas is known from the records of the Cohors XX Palmyrenorum.[467] We may therefore conclude that the Palmyrene origin of the dedicant is very probable.

glpʾ, ‘sculptor’. According to Hoftijzer and Jongeling an active participle of *glp*. According to Gianto, it is a defective spelling of *glwpʾ* the determined state of *glwp*, nomen agentis of the root *glp*.[468]

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[462] J. Starcky, “Review of “Inscriptions from Dura-Europos”, *YCS* 14 (1955)”, *Syria* 34 (1957), 366. Inholt later accepted this interpretation: *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 54.

[463] This interpretation is also accepted by Dijkstra, *Life and Loyalty*, 260-261; *PAT*, 380 (with question mark).

[464] Dijkstra, *Life and Loyalty*, for the use and meaning of this formula.

[465] Stark, *Personal Names*, 42-43 and 104; Abbadi, *Personennamen*, 41 and 146. For parallels see, Sartre, *Bosra*, 220.

[466] *TEAD* II, 120, D. 27.

[467] *TEAD PP*, index, 437.

[468] Gianto, *Orientalia* 69 (1996), 447.

SCULPTURE

Pl. XV *Relief representing Arṣu*

Rectangular stele made of local white limestone, H. 0. 35 m., W. 0. 20 m., found in the temple of Zeus Megistos. YUAG 1938. 5311. Published: *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 53-54, no. 42; Mathiesen, *Sculpture*, 198, no. 178, fig. 57.

Arṣu is standing frontally. In his right hand he holds a spear, in his left a small round shield marked with a blazon, which is part of the desert armament. Arṣu wears a mantle over a long-sleeved tunic which hangs to the ground and is fastened at the waist by a triple belt. A sword is fastened to the belt. Down the centre of the chest is a richly ornamented strap. Beneath the skirt are the tips of small feet, apparently shod in plain shoes. The embroidered tunic is part of the so-called Parthian dress, which was popular among Palmyrene nobles. Normally, however, this is a short tunic worn with trousers, instead of a tunic which almost reaches the ground. However, the lower part of the god's body is disproportionally short. Had it not been for the small feet beneath the tunic, it would have conveyed the impression that he was wearing a knee-length tunic and was only partly represented.[469] The god wears a bracelet and globular earrings. He is bareheaded. His hair is parted in the middle and is arranged in an aureole. Arṣu is beardless and wears a moustache. The moustache is frequently attested with gods from the steppe.

The relief is not dated by the inscription. Stylistically, it belongs to the group of local sculptures dated after the second half of the second century CE.[470]

WALL STREET

60. *PAT* no. 1086 (revised reading)

Palmyrene inscription on the base of a stele representing a figure on horseback and a standing figure, found in L8W (wall street), (below, 324-325). National Museum of Damascus, 10948. Published: *InvD*, 12, no. 20; *TEAD* VI, 238-240 (Torrey); Cantineau, *Syria* 19 (1938), 164; H. Ingholt, "Inscriptions and

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[469] *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 54. Perhaps the 'shoes' ought to be interpreted as part of the god's legs instead.

[470] *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 259-274.

Sculptures from Palmyra II", *Berytus* 5 (1938), 98, note 7; J. Starcky, "Gennéas et les dieux cavaliers de la Syrie", *Syria* 26 (1949), 251; Milik, *Dédicaces*, 342-343;

> *dkrn ṭb lʾšrw wšᶜd*
> *gnyʾ ᶜbd bny šqqtʾ*

> A good remembrance for Asharu and Shaᶜd, the gods. The people of the suq (market vendors) have made (it).

l. 1: The relief is described as *dkrn ṭb*, 'a good remembrance'. This emphasis suggests that the dedicants have striven to propitiate the divine recipients.[471]
ʾšrw, Asharu. The reading of a *resh* instead of *daleth* is apparent from the dot above the third letter.[472] Asharu is a god of Arab origin. His name derives from Arabic *ʾašar*, meaning 'happiness, elation'.[473] The cult of this deity is attested in Palmyra as well as in the Palmyrène.[474] The god is likewise attested in the Hauran.[475] On reliefs from Palmyra and the Palmyrène Asharu is depicted as a warrior god of the desert. *ʾšrw* is not attested as a personal name in Palmyra. In contrast, theophoric names incorporating Ashar are frequent in the Northwest Semitic area, especially where the Arab population was dominant.[476]
šᶜd, Shaᶜd. The reading *šᶜr* is possible but unlikely. In contrast to the writing *ʾšrw*, the dot above the third letter is missing.[477] Shaᶜd is an Arab deity. The etymology of the name is uncertain. It perhaps means 'happiness, good

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[471] On the meaning of this formula, see Dijkstra , *Life and Loyalty*, 289.

[472] Cf. *PNO*, 146. Contra Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra*, 35, who reads *ʾšdw*.

[473] *PNO* 144 (note by Starcky); Milik, *Dédicaces*, 344. Milik, *Dédicaces*, 343, proposes to read Iššaru. Alternatively E. Lipínski, "Review of J. Teixidor, *The Pantheon of Palmyra*", *BiOr* 38 (1981), col. 394, suggests the name derives from the Arabic root *šw/yr*, meaning 'expert horseman', like the later Arab deity *ʾiswar*.

[474] In Palmyra a small bas-relief representing a god of the desert carrying a lance by the name *ʾšr gny* (*PAT* no. 1491, n.d). Dedicatory inscription on an altar found in the street to the temple of Baalshamin: *PAT* no. 1555 (n.d.): *lʾšr šbb [. . . .]*. On a relief from the Khirbet Semrine in the Palmyrène the god *ʾšr gnyʾ ṭb*, is associated with *ʾbgl gnyʾ ṭb*; *PAT* no. 1670 (154 CE); Cf. *PNO* pl. XXII, 1; Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra*, pl. LXIII, 2.

[475] D. Sourdel, *Les cultes du Hauran à l'époque romaine* (Paris 1952), 86-87; Milik, *Dédicaces*, 341; Teixidor, *Pantheon*, 83-84.

[476] Abbadi, *Personennamen*, 68. Cf the divine name *ʾšrbl* in Hatra.

[477] *PAT*, "šᶜdw", 416.

fortune'.[478] In Palmyra the god is represented together with Allat and Malakbel on an altar from the temple of Baalshamin.[479] On *RTP* nos. 248 and 249 Shaᶜd is associated with Maᶜnu, another Arab god. Here the camel is the animal of the two gods. A relief from Ras esh-Shaar in the Palmyrène represents Shaᶜd with the god Maᶜnu. Shaᶜd is shown riding a camel, whereas Maᶜnu is riding a horse.[480]

l. 2: *gnyᵓ*, 'gods'. The word is probably related to Arabic *djinn*.[481] The term is especially frequent in the Palmyrène. It follows from these texts that the term is almost identical with *ᵓlhᵓ*, 'god'.[482] The use of the word *gnyᵓ* first and foremost reflects the Arab character of the deity and/ or the worshippers.[483]

bny, literally 'the sons of', designates that someone belongs to a community, such as a 'tribe', a clan, a family, a religious association or a village.[484]

šqqtᵓ, status emphaticus of *šqqh*, 'narrow street, market'. Various readings have been proposed for this word. Torrey reads *šqtmtᵓ*, 'sycamore wood'. This reading is followed by Milik and Ingholt, but they propose another meaning[485] However, it is unlikely that we should read a *qof* and a *tau* after the first letter. Instead, we should read one letter, a *qof* or a *mu*.[486] Du Mesnil du Buisson, followed by *PAT*, reads *bnyšm mtᵓ*, Ben-Iashem Mata, a personal name. This reading is possible. However, the personal name *bnyšm* is not attested in Palmyra.[487] The reading *šqqtᵓ* was first proposed by Cantineau and is accepted by Gawlikowski and Hoftijzer and Jongeling.[488] Cantineau translates 'inhabitants of the street'. Gawlikowski proposes the alternative translation

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[478] Milik, *Dédicaces*, 343-344 and 258. *DNWSI*,"'šᶜd", 1178; Teixidor, *Pantheon*, 82-83; *PAT*, 'šᶜdw', 416.

[479] *PAT* no. 0181 (n.d.); *BS I*, pl. IX, 3-8.

[480] *PAT* no. 1700 (n.d.); *PNO*, pl. XXVII; cf. Milik, *Dédicaces*, 343.

[481] *DNWSI*, "gny", 229-230.

[482] J. Starcky, "Gennéas et les dieux cavaliers de la Syrie", *Syria* 26 (1949), 249-257; *PNO*, 135-137; D. Schlumberger, "Le prétendu dieu Genneas", *MUSJ* 46 (1970), 209-222; Teixidor, *Pantheon*, 76-89; Gawlikowski, "Dieux de Palmyre", 2636-2638; Dijkstra, *Life and Loyalty*, 131.

[483] Starcky, "Gennéas et les dieux cavaliers", 136.

[484] *DNWSI*, 194. In Palmyra *bny* is used three times for members belonging to a religious association: *PAT* nos. 2770 and 2771 (cf. Milik, *Dédicaces*, 59-62) and *RTP* no. 301. In inscriptions from the Palmyrène it designates the inhabitants of a village (*bny qrytᵓ*): *PAT* no. 1746 (n.d.), or the members of a household (*bny byth*): *PAT* no. 1666 (n.d.).

[485] By analogy with Syriac *šaqmûnê*, Milik translates 'wine skins'. In Palmyra an association of ἀσκοναυτοποιῶν, 'fabricants of skin rafts', is attested: H. Seyrig, "Les fils du roi Odainat", *AAS* 13 (1963), 159-166.

[486] *InvD*, 59.

[487] In contrast, the name *mtᵓ* is attested in Palmyra: Stark, *Personal Names*, 38 and 98.

[488] Cantineau, *Syria* 1938, 164; Gawlikowski, *Temple*, 32-33; *DNWSI*, 1189.

'people of the market', i.e. market vendors.[489] Exact parallels are lacking, but the expression recalls the *bny qryt*ᵓ and *bny byth* attested in inscriptions from the Palmyrène.[490] If the reading proposed by Cantineau is correct, it follows that we are dealing with a communal dedication. In Palmyra, dedicating agencies comprising more than one person are restricted to siblings or to individuals who are engaged in some kind of co-operation. In Dura, we know of two examples in which the dedication agency is a religious association.[491] The relief dedicated by the Bene Mita, the archers, to Iarḫibol, provides a third example of a communal dedication (cf. above, no. 16).

Relief dedicated to Asharu and Shaᶜd
Rectangular stele made of crystalline gypsum, H. 0. 44 m., W. 0. 41 m., found in L8W (wall street). On the back a similar relief is blocked out crossways. Here the altar is lacking. The Palmyrene inscription on the plinth dedicates the monument to Asharu and Shaᶜd (above, no. 56). National Museum of Damascus 10948 (or 10947). Published: *TEAD* VI, 228-238, pl. XXX, 1-2 (Hopkins); Rostovtzeff, "Dura and the Problem of Parthian Art", fig. 40; Schlumberger, "Prétendu dieu Gennéas", 212; Perkins, *Art of Dura-Europos*, 96-98, pl. 39; Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra*, pl. LXVI, 1; *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 57-60, no. 45, 199-201, fig. 45; Mathiesen, *Sculpture*, 200, no. 181, fig. 59.

On the left-hand side a figure on horseback is standing before a small rectangular altar, resting on a two-stepped base. An eagle perches on the rider's flying cloak. The bird holds a crown in its beak, which touches the rider's head. The horseman sits with his head and torso frontal, his legs in profile. In his right hand he holds an object which is probably to be identified as a small whip. The left arm is not rendered at all. He wears the indigenous costume of the desert people, consisting of a short-sleeved tunic and a mantle which flies out behind him. In addition, a longer piece of material is wound around his hips. It covers his legs, leaving the lower leg bare. The hair of the horseman is rendered in the so-called Parthian coiffure: over the top of the head is a mass of hair, parted at the centre and drawn in parallel lines; at the side of the face are huge puffs, rendered in snail curls. He wears a winglike moustache and has no beard. Behind the rider a bowcase and quiver rest against the flank of the horse. The horse stands with all four feet planted firmly on the ground.

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[489] On the meaning of this word in Palmyrene inscriptions: *PAT* 417. Cf. Assyrian *suqaqu*, 'alley, narrow street').

[490] Above, note 484.

[491] Dijkstra, *Life and Loyalty*, 275.

On the right-hand side of the altar is a male figure. He stands frontally, but leans sharply to the left. His right arm extends straight out above the horse's head, towards the rider. In the left hand he carries a small round shield, pressed against his left shoulder. Like the horseman, he wears the indigenous costume of the desert people.[492] His face and coiffure are almost identical with the horseman's.

The relief was dedicated to Asharu and Shaᶜd (above, no. 56). In all likelihood the two figures are to be identified as such, despite the fact that it is peculiar that one god salutes the other over an altar. Stylistically, the relief belongs to a group of local sculptures, dated in the second half of the second century CE.

PALMYRENE GATE

61. *PAT* no. 1079 (revised reading)

Palmyrene votive inscription in five lines, and a Greek graffito, on an altar found at the Palmyrene gate. Published: *TEAD* I, 45, no. 2 (Greek) and 61-62 (Palmyrene), fig. 24, pls. II, 2 and IV, 4; *InvD.* 6-7, no. 13.

ᶜbd mqymw br yrḥbwlᵓ lgdᵓ

μν(ησθῇ) Τυχι(κός).... ιατ...

Mokimu, the son of Iarḫibole has made (this) for the Gad

PAT omits the Greek text.

mqymw, Mokimu, is common in Palmyrene onomastics. The name is attested in several Palmyrene inscriptions from Dura-Europos, and likewise occurs in the Greek transcription Μοκίμος, and in the Latin transcription Mocimus (above, no. 37 a).

yrḥbwlᵓ, Iarḫibole, is one of the most common names in Palmyra. The Greek transcription Ἰάριβωλῆς occurs on the Mithraic relief dedicated 170-171 CE (above, no. 29).

gdᵓ, Gad. According to Torrey the Gad is actually the Gad of Dura. This, of course, does not follow from the inscription proper. However, two altars found with this altar are dedicated to the Tyche and Genius of Dura respectively.[493] Consequently it is reasonable to suppose that the present altar was likewise dedicated to the Gad of the city.

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[492] *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 58.

62. *PAT no. 1080* (revised reading)

Greek inscription on the plinth of a relief representing Heracles, found at the Palmyrene gate (below, 327). To the right of the figure of Heracles is a Palmyrene graffito. YUAG 1929. 373. Published: *TEAD* I, 47 (Rostovtzeff), fig. 5; *TEAD* II, 145-146, fig. 22 (Torrey; correction upon *TEAD* I); *InvD*, 7, no. 14; *TEAD Heracles*, 38, pl. VIII, 2 (Ingholt).

Γαθηναθάνης ἀνέθηκεν

Erected by Gathenathan

^{c}bd
zbd^{c}th
br bb$^{\supset}$

Zabda^{c}ateh, the son of Baba has made (it)

PAT omits the Greek text. On palaeographical grounds Welles dates the Greek inscription in the second half of the second century CE.[494]

l. 1: *^{c}bd* follows the reading proposed by Torrey. Instead, Du Mesnil du Buisson and Ingholt read *br*. They assume that a personal name, now lost, preceded this word. In my view, it is extremely unlikely that the genealogy of a Palmyrene graffito was this long and I therefore find Torrey's reading more probable.

l. 2: *zbd^{c}th*, Zabda^{c}ateh, and Γαθηναθάνης, Gathenathan, both mean 'gift of Ateh', but are composed with different verbs. According to Torrey they refer to the same individual.[495]

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[493] *TEAD* I, 45-46, no. 3 (Greek; n.d.); *TEAD* I, 42-44, no. 1, fig. 21 (Latin; dated between 185 and 193 CE. Cf. Dijkstra, *Life and Loyalty*, 222).

[494] *TEAD Heracles*, 38.

[495] *TEAD* II, 146. Followed by Rosenthal, *Sprache*, 94, note 1.

l. 2: *bbʾ*, Baba, The same name possibly occurs in a Palmyrene graffito from the temple of the Gaddê (above, no. 18). The Greek transcription Βαβας is attested frequently in Dura (cf. the variants Βαβουῖς, Βαβουῖος, Latin Babuis).[496]

Fragmentary relief representing Heracles
Lower part of a relief made of white limestone. H. 0. 23 m., W. 0. 21 m., found in the Palmyrene gate. YUAG 1929. 373. Published: *TEAD* I, 18, fig. 5 (Pillet); *TEAD* II, 145-146 (Torrey); *TEAD Heracles*, 24-25, no. 18, pl. VIII, 2.

Heracles stands frontally with his left leg in profile, his right leg frontal. The lion skin hangs over his left arm. Athena was not portrayed beside Heracles, as was suggested in the first publication. Downey notes that the modelling is remarkably good for a Durene relief.

63. Pl. XVI. *PAT* 1078 (revised reading)
Bilingual inscription on the lower base of the relief representing Nemesis, found at the Palmyrene gate (below, 328-331). YUAG 1938. 5312 (1929. 369). Published: *TEAD* I, 48 and 62-64 (Torrey); *InvD*, 6, no. 12.

Θεᾷ Νεμέσι Ιούλιος Αὐρήλιος Μαλωχὰς
Σουδαίου Παλμυρηνὸς εὐξάμενος ἀνέθηκεν

ʿbd wmwdʾ mlwkʾ br šwdy tdmryʾ lnmsys
šnt 5. 100+40+10+5+1

Greek: Julius Aurelius Malochas, the son of Soudaios, the Palmyrene, erected (it) to the goddess Nemesis in accordance with a vow

Palmyrene: Maloka, the son of Shudai, the Palmyrene, has made (this) and dedicated (it) to Nemesis in the year 556 (245 CE).

l. 1: Μαλωχᾶς, transcribes the Aramaic name *mlwkʾ*, meaning ‘counsellor’.[497] This inscription provides the only instance of the name in inscriptions from Dura-Europos. The name is common in Palmyra.[498]

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[496] Milik, *Dédicaces*, 328.
[497] Stark, *Personal Names*, 95.
[498] Stark, *Personal Names*, 31-32.

Σουδαῖος, transcribes *šwdy,* a name derived from the verbal noun ***shudai***, 'promise', which is familiar from Syriac inscriptions from Edessa. The name is also attested in the Hauran.[499] The Greek name is attested once in Dura.[500] The name is not attested in inscriptions from Palmyra.

παλμυρηνός, *tdmryʾ*, 'Palmyrene'. This inscription provides the only instance from Dura-Europos in which an individual explicitly identifies himself as originating from Palmyra.

εὐξάμενος, this word, clearly visible on the photograph, is omitted in *PAT.*

l. 2: The date, 244 CE, follows the collated reading of *PAT.*

Pl. XVI. *Relief representing Nemesis*

Relief made of white limestone, possibly Palmyrene. H. 0. 45 m., W. 0. 40 m., found at the Palmyrene gate. YUAG 1938. 5312 (1929. 369). Published: *TEAD* I, 19 (Pillet); *TEAD* I, 65-68, pl. IV. 1 (Cumont); H. Seyrig, "Monuments syriens du culte de Némésis", *Syria* 13 (1932), 53-62, pl. XVIII, 5; Perkins, *Art of Dura-Europos*, 89, pl. 36; *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 29-31, no. 9, pl. IV, 9; Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra*, pl. XII; M. Gawlikowski, "Helios (in peripheria orientali)", *LIMC* V.1 (1990), 1034, no. 3; P. Linant de Bellefonds, "Nemesis (in peripheria orientali)", *LIMC* VI.1 (1992), 771, no. 16.

A female figure, identified by the inscriptions on the plinth as Nemesis (above, no. 63), is represented on the left-hand side of the relief. The goddess is standing frontally, with her weight resting on her left leg. Her right arm is bent in at the elbow. With her right hand, now missing, she pulled away the drapery from her breast. The lower part of her bended left arm is broken off. Across and above her shoulder are traces of a narrow rectangular object, probably a rod or a rudder, which she originally held in her left hand. Nemesis is clad in a long chiton and a *himation*, which covers her head and her upper body. Around her neck is a necklace made of round beads. The face of the goddess is not preserved; in all likelihood it was smashed intentionally in antiquity. On the ground to her left a small griffin is depicted standing in profile. Its forepaws are resting on a wheel.

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[499] R. Mouterde, "Inscriptions grecques conservées à l'institut de Damas", *Syria* 6 (1925), 243. Cf. *TEAD* I, 63-64.

[500] The name probably occurs in a graffito from the temple of the Palmyrene gods: *TEAD* IV, 173, no. 357.

The iconography of Nemesis is purely Graeco-Roman, as is the case with other Syrian representations of the goddess.[501] The goddess exposes her breast in order to spit on it. This apotropaic gesture is frequently found in representations of Nemesis. The griffin with its forepaw resting on a wheel is typical of Nemesis' iconography in the Roman Imperial Period. This motif frequently substitutes the goddess and clearly is her most distinctive attribute. The griffin and the wheel both allude to Nemesis' role as avenger and provider of justice, two fundamental functions of the goddess.[502] The wheel symbolizes the cyclical movements of human fortunes and alludes to Nemesis' role in meting out 'just punishments' to those who deserve them.[503] The griffin traditionally functioned as avenger and dispenser of justice, and hence the animal fits in well with the wheel-symbol.[504] The measuring rod in Nemesis' right hand is likewise common in her iconography and indicates that one should do nothing beyond measure.[505] Nemesis shares the wheel and the measuring stick with Tyche-Fortuna, a goddess with whom she was closely connected in the Imperial Period.[506] In all likelihood, the Nemesis depicted on the relief from Dura was likewise paralleled with Good Fortune; the relief was found in the proximity of a shrine dedicated to Fortuna-Tyche.[507] The essentially Greek nature of the goddess exemplified by her iconography is emphasised by the fact that her Greek name is simply transliterated in Palmyrene rather than being replaced by the name of a local goddess.

On the right-hand side of the relief Julius Aurelius Malochas, the dedicant of the relief, is depicted offering on a *thymiaterion*. His face, intentionally smashed in antiquity, is depicted frontally, whereas his body is slightly turned towards the goddess. With his right hand he reaches across his body, presumably to place incense on the *thymiaterion* standing to his right. The left hand is held directly above the flames. It is clenched into a fist with a hole through the centre, probably for the insertion of some sacrificial apparatus, now lost. The sacrificant wears a short-sleeved tunic, a ***himation***, and sandals.

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[501] *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 191-192; Linant de Bellefonds, "Nemesis", 772. For an extensive discussion of the iconography of Nemesis see P. Karanatassi and F. Rausa, "Nemesis", *LIMC* VI.1 (1992), 733-770.

[502] M. B. Hornum, *Nemesis, the Roman State and the Games* (RGRW 117; Leiden 1993), 24-32, on the origin and meaning of this attribute. I do not subscribe to Hornum's hypothesis that Nemesis was associated with the griffin because both were connected with the ruler.

[503] Hornum, *Nemesis*, 26-27, with references to the literary and epigraphic sources.

[504] I. Flagge, *Untersuchungen zur Bedeutung des Greifen* (Sankt Augustin 1975), 12-14, 34-43, and 122.

[505] Hornum, *Nemesis*, 63, with references to the literary sources.

[506] Karanatassi and Rausa, "Nemesis", 735 and 761. The connection between Tyche and Nemesis extends back into the Hellenistic era and became especially strong in the Imperial Period: Hornum, *Nemesis*, 20, note 2.

[507] *TEAD* I, 46, and *TEAD* II, 155.

In view of the short-sleeved tunic worn by the sacrificant, he is identified by Susan Downey as a Palmyrene priest.[508] This is unlikely. Not only is this type of dress not confined to priests, the few traces that are left of his headgear do not tally with the priestly modius that is normally worn by the priests of Palmyra. Cumont identifies the dedicant as a merchant or caravan trader.[509] There are, however, no arguments to support this hypothesis. It is more plausible to assume that the dedicant was related to the Roman army. Not only is his name common among Palmyrene soldiers stationed at Dura-Europos, but the majority of the other monuments found at the gate can be ascribed to soldiers. The identification of the dedicant as a soldier accords well with Nemesis' popularity in the army, which resulted from her function to repress violence and to punish ***hybris***. In this capacity she ensured the maintenance of the Roman state, a role which must have been appealing to people serving in the army.[510]

In the centre of the relief, between the head of the sacrificant and Nemesis, is the bust of a nimbate, radiate sun god. The god faces full front. His facial features are erased completely. Like the face of the sacrificant and Nemesis, it probably was smashed intentionally in antiquity. The god has short curly hair, rendered in simplified snail-shell curls. Behind his head 16 rays are represented against a round nimbus. Over his cuirass the god is wearing a ***paludamentum***, which is fastened on his right shoulder with a round brooch.

The identity of the sun god and his relationship with Nemesis are obscure. Despite the Graeco-Roman iconography of the goddess, the presence of the sun god is unusual and requires an explanation.[511] In the past various theological clarifications were advanced in order to explain the association of both deities, none of which is convincing.[512] The stone and the style of the relief suggest that it was produced in Palmyra and imported into Dura.[513] Since Nemesis is only rarely associated with solar deities in the Graeco-Roman world, it is reasonable to look for an explanation in Palmyra. A group of Palmyrene tesserae indeed associate Nemesis with an anonymous sun god.[514] In Palmyra Nemesis was in all likelihood identified with the Arab goddess Allat, who was affiliated in her sanctuary with Shamash, one of the three solar deities worshipped in Palmyra.[515] Possibly, therefore, Nemesis' association with the sun god mirrors the cultic organization of Allat's sanctuary in Palmyra. Alternatively, we may propose that the presence of the sun god is due to the military background of the dedicant. The solar deities Iarḥibol and Malakbel were very popular among Palmyrene soldiers serving in the Roman army.[516] The military background of the dedicant would therefore readily explain the presence of the sun god.

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[508] *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 31.

[509] *TEAD* I, 67-68.

[510] *TEAD* I, 68; Karanatassi and Rausa, "Nemesis", 736. Materials which testify to Nemesis' popularity with the military have been assembled by Hornum, *Nemesis*. Cf. especially 89-90. In this study Hornum stresses Nemesis' quality to maintain the state order.

[511] Nemesis' association with the sun is far less common than Seyrig, "Culte de Nemesis", 55, note 7, suggests. Apart from one instance, these representations are confined to gems. Furthermore, contrary to the relief from Dura the representations on the gems associate Nemesis with other deities and depict the busts of Sol *and* Luna. Cf. Karanatassi and Rausa, "Nemesis", nos. 196, 199, 202, 203.

[512] F. Chapouthier, "L'influence grecque à Doura-Europos", *REA* 34 (1932), 75, suggests that the presence of the sun god is due to the concept that both the sun and Nemesis were all-seeing. Cumont, *TEAD* I, 65-67, explains the presence of the sun god by the concept of Nemesis and the sun as avengers. Seyrig, "Culte de Nemesis", 63-61, disagrees by arguing that the concept

PALMYRENE GRAFFITI ON THE PALMYRENE GATE AND THE FORTIFICATIONS

64-67. *PAT nos. 1069-1072*

On the Palmyrene gate, towers 15 and 18, four graffiti were found, each with the same name. Published: *InvD*, 4-5, nos. 3-6.

ᶜwydy Awidai

ᶜwydy, Awidai, is a hypocoristicon, 'refugee of N.N.' Apart from these instances, the name is not attested in Palmyrene inscriptions from Dura-Europos. The Latin transcription Avidas is attested in the military papyri from Dura. The name is widely attested in Palmyra. It is also well-known in the early history of Edessa, and occurs in epigraphic Syriac.[517]

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of Nemesis as an avenger was rare in the third century CE. Alternatively, he suggests the sun god is a hypostasis of the supreme god, who, in turn, is related to Nemesis-Fortuna, viz. the cosmic aspects of Nemesis as queen of the world. His interpretation is followed by *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 191; Linant de Bellefonds, "Nemesis", 772. However, Seyrig's identification of the sun as the hypostasis of the supreme god is questionable. Cf. above, Chapter VI, 171.

[513] Rostovtzeff, "Dura and the Problem of Parthian Art", 244; *TEAD Stone and Plaster*, 31.

[514] *RTP* nos. 311-313.

[515] On Allat's association with Shamash see Gawlikowski, *Temple*, 101-103. On Nemesis' identification with Allat, see above, Chapter III, note 28.

[516] Chapter VI, 181-189.

[517] Stark, *Personal Names*, 44 and 104-105, for parallels and diffusion.

68. *PAT 1073*

Graffito inscribed on the wall between tower 20 and 21. Published: *InvD*, 5, no. 7.

bny

bny, Bani, is a personal name of uncertain meaning which is common in Palmyra.[518] The same name is attested in one other graffito from Dura-Europos (below, no. 69). The Greek transcriptions Banios, Bennos, Bonneos, are not attested in Dura.[519]

69. *PAT 1074*

Graffito inscribed on the wall of tower 2. Published: *InvD*, 5, no. 8.

bny
ʾtm[.]
škm

l. 1: *bny*, Bani, the same name as in the previous graffito.
l. 2: *ʾtm[.]*, Atam [?], the reading and meaning of this name are uncertain. Perhaps we have to restore *ʾtʿmn*, 'Ateh is with us', a personal name attested in Palmyra.[520]
l. 3: *Škm*, Shoukem, a Jewish name, not attested in Palmyra.[521]

70. *PAT no. 1075*

Graffito inscribed on the wall of tower 2. Published: *InvD*, 5, no. 9; Cantineau, *Syria* 19 (1938), 164.

mqymw
br tymy

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[518] Stark, *Personal Names*, 77, with references.
[519] Wuthnow, *Semitischen Menschennamen*, 35 and 37.
[520] Stark, *Personal Names*, 73.
[521] *InvD*, 65, for references.

mqymw, Mokimu, is attested in a Palmyrene inscription on an altar found at the Palmyrene gate (above no. 61)
tymy, Taimai, follows the reading proposed by Cantineau. This name is frequently attested in Palmyrene inscriptions from Dura-Europos (above, no. 8).

71. *PAT no. 1075*
Graffito inscribed on the wall of tower 2. Published: *InvD*, 6, no. 10; Cantineau, *Syria* 19 (1938), 164.

mqymw
[......]

mqymw, Mokimu, the same name as in no. 69.

72. *PAT no. 1075*
Graffito inscribed on the wall of tower 2. Published: *InvD*, 6, no. 11; Cantineau, *Syria* 19 (1938), 164.

mqymw
br tymy
ʾyth

Undoubtedly the same individual as in no. 69.

73. *PAT no. 1120* (revised reading)
Graffito on the rampart of tower 2. Published: *InvD*, 39-40, no. 54; Milik, *Dédicaces*, 132.

dkyr brbᶜ
šmyn

May Barbashamin be remembered

brbᶜšmyn, Barbashamin, ‘son of Baᶜl Shamin’, follows the reading proposed by Milik. This name is common among soldiers in Dura-Europos, and frequently attested in Semitic, Greek and Latin inscriptions throughout Syria.[522]

74. *PAT no. 1121*

Graffito on the rampart of tower 14. Published: *InvD*, 40-41, no. 55.

db

db, Deb, is interpreted by Du Mesnil du Buisson as a personal name, deriving from the Aramaic word for 'wolf'. Parallels from Dura and Palmyra are missing. Both the reading and the interpretation of this personal name (if it is indeed to be interpreted as such) are uncertain.

75. *PAT no. 1068* (revised reading)

Dipinto on a vase found in tomb 12 of the necropolis. Published: *InvD,* 4, no. 2

dk[yr] gdʾ br [. . .]
bl wʾrṣʾ

May be remembered Gadde, the son of [. . .]
(before) Bel and Arṣa

l. 1: *dkyr,* 'may be remembered'. In contrast, Mesnil de Buisson proposes to read *kn[n]*, 'may be appointed'. Cantineau rightly remarks that both readings and interpretations are very uncertain.[523] In the present context *dkyr* would be the most plausible formula, but there is no way to be certain.

gdʾ, Gadde, divine name used as a personal name. The name is also attested in a Palmyrene-Greek dipinto from the 'house of the banquet' (above, no. 42).

l. 2: *ʾrṣʾ*, Arṣa. This writing deviates from the usual writing *ʾrṣw*; cf. the writing *rṣʾ* in a graffito from the temple of the Palmyrene gods (above, no. 50). Both writings revert to the orthography rḍw in Safaitic, Thamudic and Arabic inscriptions.[524]

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[522] *TEAD PP*, index: Cf. the examples listed by Milik, *Dédicaces*, 128, 132, 335; Sartre, *Bosra*, 197.

[523] Cantineau, *Syria* 19 (1938), 164.

[524] Milik, *Dédicaces*, 49.

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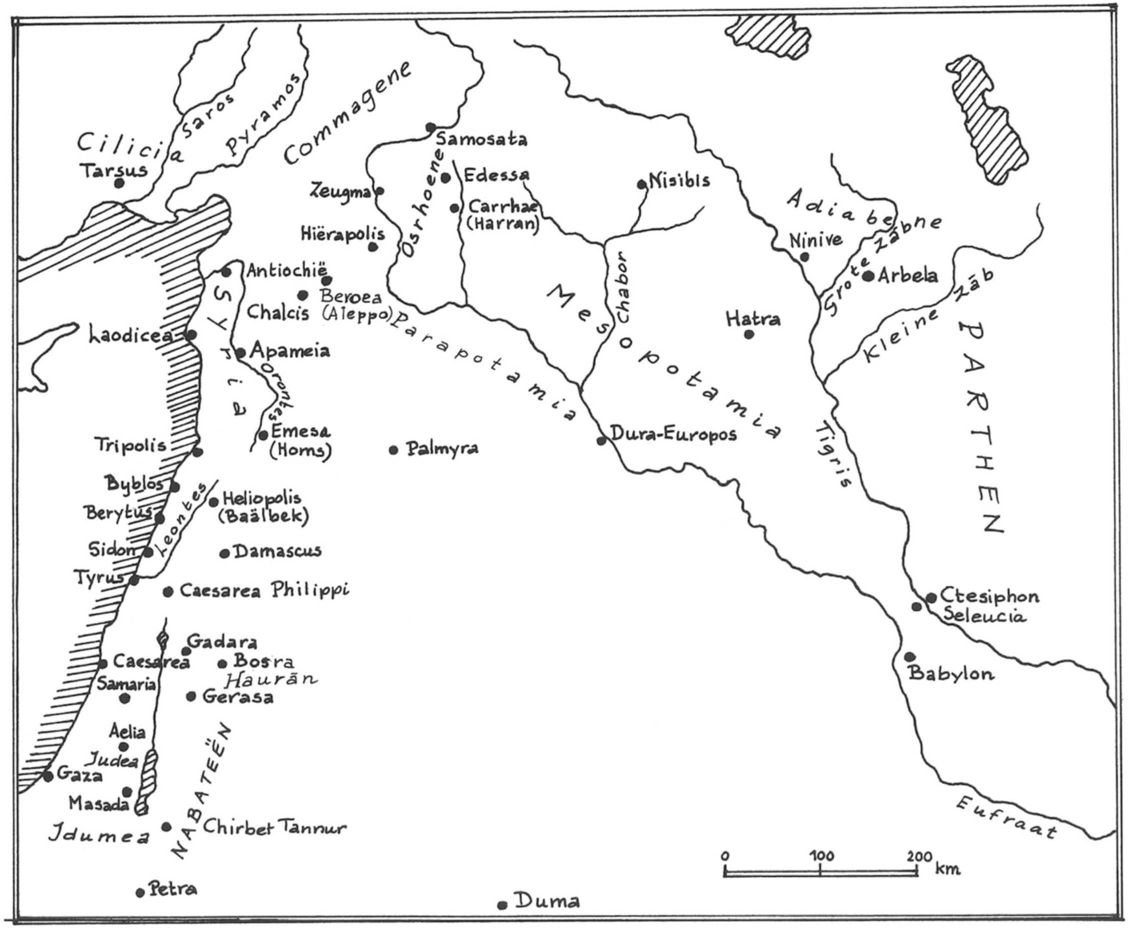
Cilicia
Saros
Pyramos
Commagene
Tarsus
Samosata
Edessa
Nisibis
Zeugma
Osrhoene
Carrhae (Harran)
Adiabene
Grote Zāb
Ninive
Arbela
Hiërapolis
Antiochië
Beroea (Aleppo)
Chalcis
Syria
Mesopotamia
Chabor
Hatra
Kleine Zāb
Laodicea
Apameia
Orontes
Parapotamia
PARTHEN
Tigris
Emesa (Homs)
Palmyra
Dura-Europos
Tripolis
Byblos
Berytus
Leontes
Heliopolis (Baälbek)
Sidon
Damascus
Tyrus
Caesarea Philippi
Ctesiphon
Seleucia
Gadara
Caesarea
Bosra
Haurān
Babylon
Samaria
Gerasa
Aelia
Judea
Gaza
Masada
NABATEËN
Jdumea
Chirbet Tannur
Eufraat
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100
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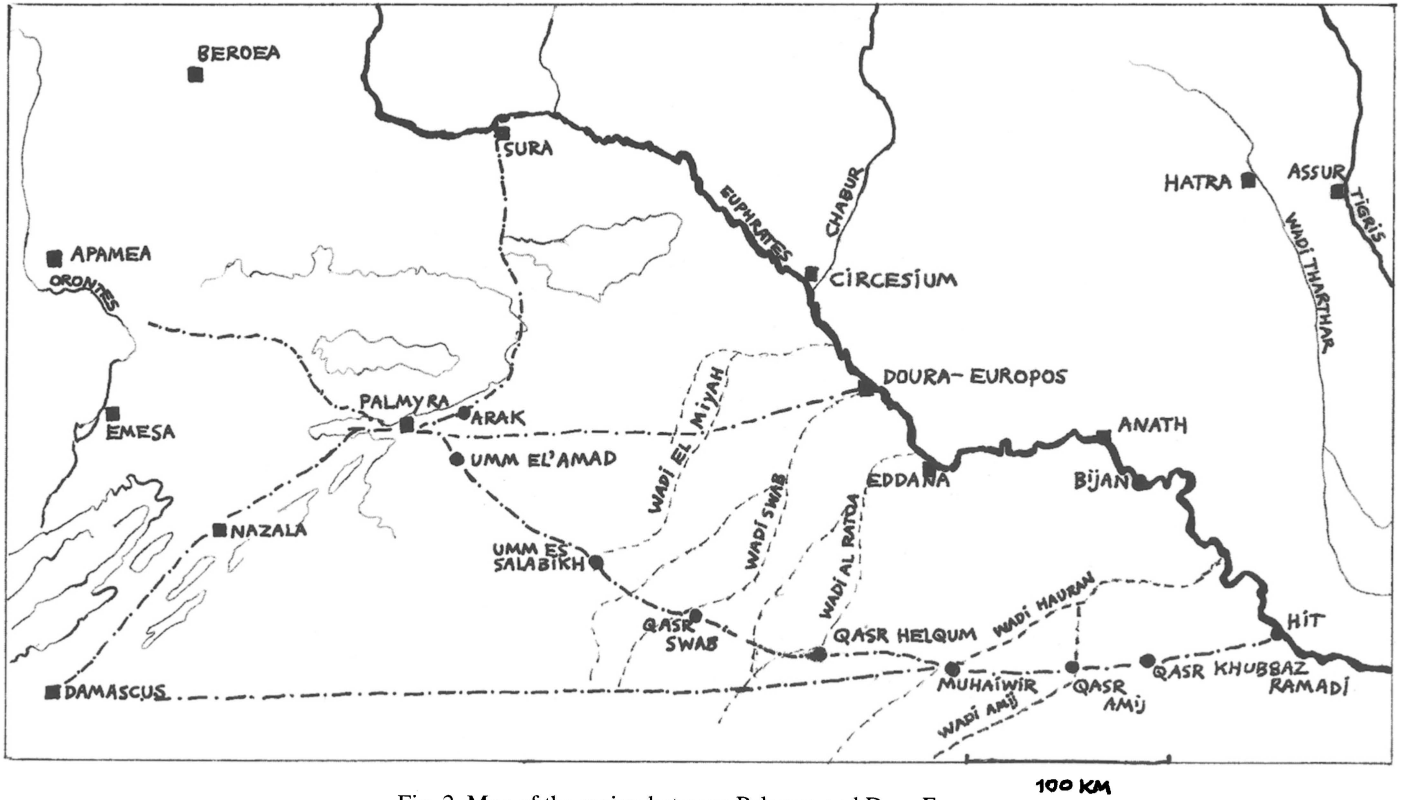
Petra
Duma

Fig. 1 Map of Syria.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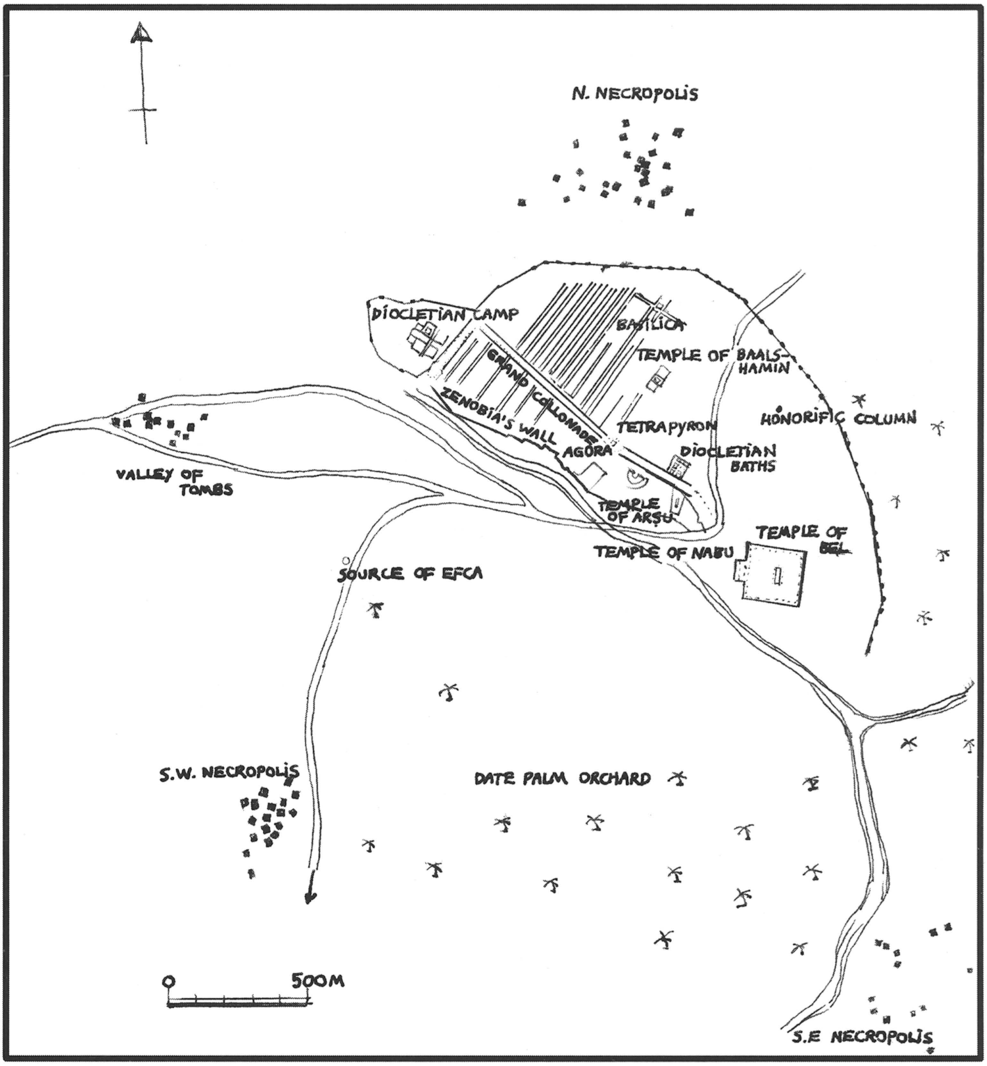
SURA
APAMEA
ORONTES
EMESA
PALMYRA
ARAK
UMM EL'AMAD
NAZALA
DAMASCUS
EUPHRATES
CHABUR
CIRCESIUM
DOURA- EUROPOS
WADI EL MIYAH
WADI SWAB
WADI AL RATGA
EDDANA
UMM ES SALABIKH
QASR SWAB
QASR HELQUM
WADI HAURAN
MUHAIWIR
WADI AMIJ
QASR AMIJ
QASR KHUBBAZ
RAMADI
HIT
ANATH
BIJAN
HATRA
ASSUR
TIGRIS
WADI THARTHAR
100 KM

Fig. 2 Map of the region between Palmyra and Dura-Europos.


N. NECROPOLIS
DIOCLETIAN CAMP
BASILICA
TEMPLE OF BAALSHAMIN
GRAND COLLONADE
ZENOBIA'S WALL
TETRAPYRON
HONORIFIC COLUMN
AGORA
DIOCLETIAN BATHS
VALLEY OF TOMBS
TEMPLE OF ARSU
TEMPLE OF BEL
TEMPLE OF NABU
SOURCE OF EFCA
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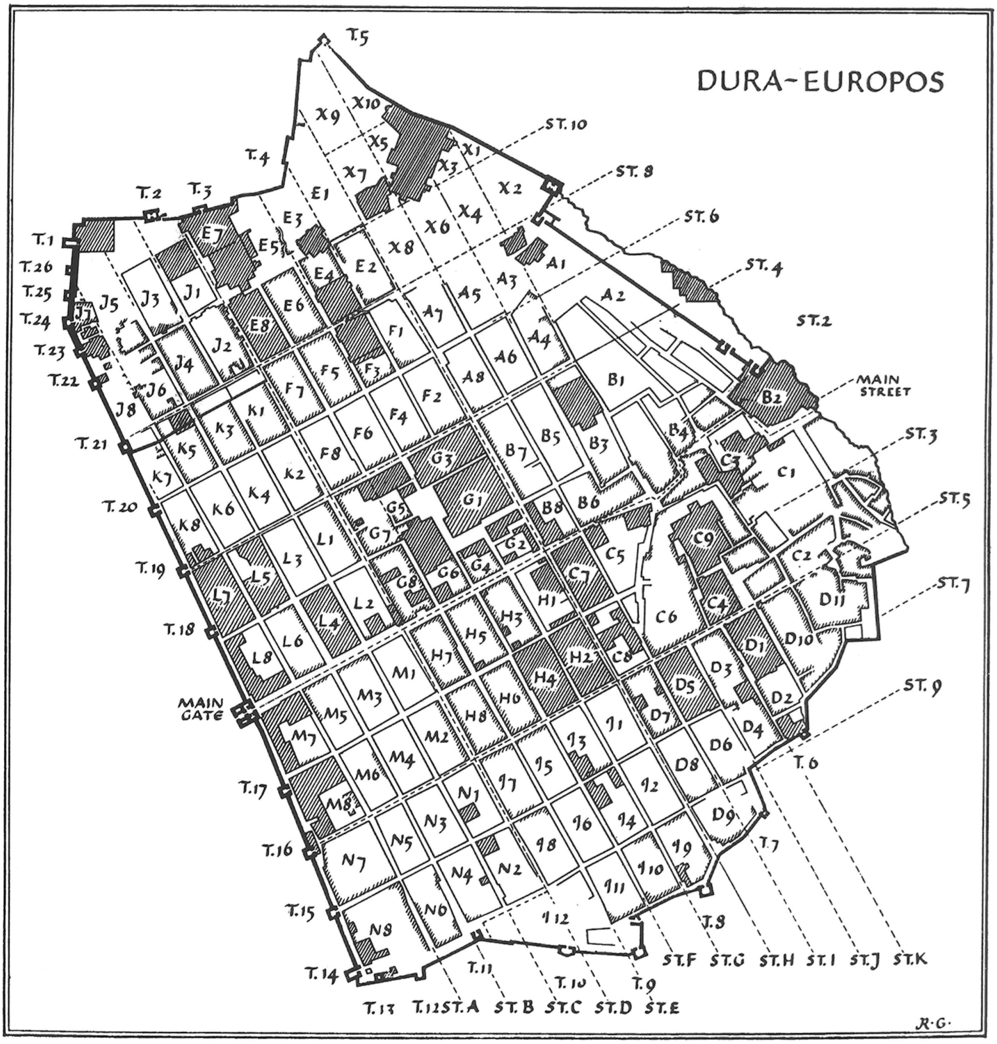
DATE PALM ORCHARD
0
500M
S.E NECROPOLIS

Fig. 3 City plan of Palmyra.


DURA-EUROPOS
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X9
X5
X1
X3
X7
X2
X4
X6
X8
ST.10
ST.8
ST.6
ST.4
ST.2
MAIN STREET
ST.3
ST.5
ST.7
ST.9
T.4
T.2
T.3
T.1
T.26
T.25
T.24
T.23
T.22
T.21
T.20
T.19
T.18
MAIN GATE
T.17
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T.15
T.14
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T.12
ST.A
ST.B
ST.C
ST.D
ST.E
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H5
H6
H7
H8
I1
I2
I3
I4
I5
I6
I7
I8
I9
I10
I11
I12
K1
K2
K3
K4
K5
K6
K7
K8
L1
L2
L3
L4
L5
L6
L7
L8
M1
M2
M3
M4
M5
M6
M7
M8
N1
N2
N3
N4
N5
N6
N7
N8
R.G.

A1 – Military Temple
B2 – Private Houses
B3 – Temple of Zeus Theos
B8 – Private Houses
C3 – Private Houses, Roman Bath
C4 – Temple of Zeus Megistos
C5 – Private Houses
C7 – Private Houses
C8 – Private Houses
C9 – Redoubt Palace
D1 – House of Lysias
D2 – Private Houses
D5 – Private Houses
D7 – Private Houses
E3 – Roman Bath
E4 – Private Houses (Barracks)
E7 – Temple of Azzanathkona Praetorium
E8 – Private Houses (Barracks)
F3 – Parthian Bath Amphitheatre
G1 – Private Houses, shops
G2 – Private Houses, shops
G3 – Private Houses, shops
G4 – Private Houses, shops
G5 – Private Houses, shops
G6 – Private Houses, shops
G8 – Private Houses, shops
H1 – Temple of the Gaddé
H2 – Temple of Atargatis
H4 – Temple of Artemis
I3 – Private Houses
I4 – Private Houses
J1 – House of Tribune
J3/5 – Temple of the Palmyrene Gods
J7 – Mithraeum, Barracks
K8 – Private Houses
L4 – Caravanserai
L5 – Temple of Adonis
L7 – Synagogue Private Houses
L8 – Tychaeum Private Houses
M7 – Roman Bath Private Houses
M8 – Christian Building Private Houses
M8/N7 – Temple of Zeus Kyrios
N8 – Temple of Aphlad Private Houses
X3/5 – Headquarters of Dux
X7 – Dolicheneum

Fig. 4 City plan of Dura-Europos.

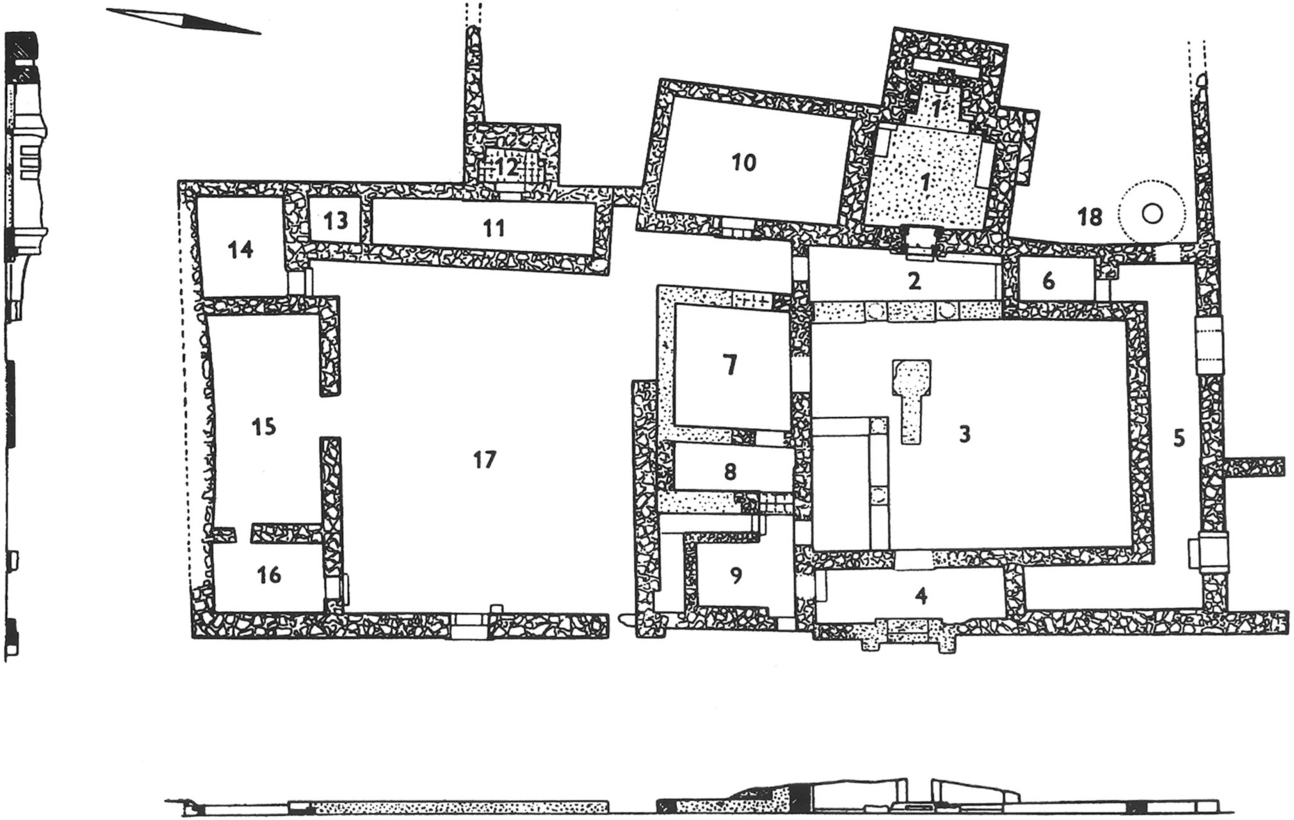

1
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18

Fig. 5 Ground plan of the temple in the necropolis of Dura-Europos.

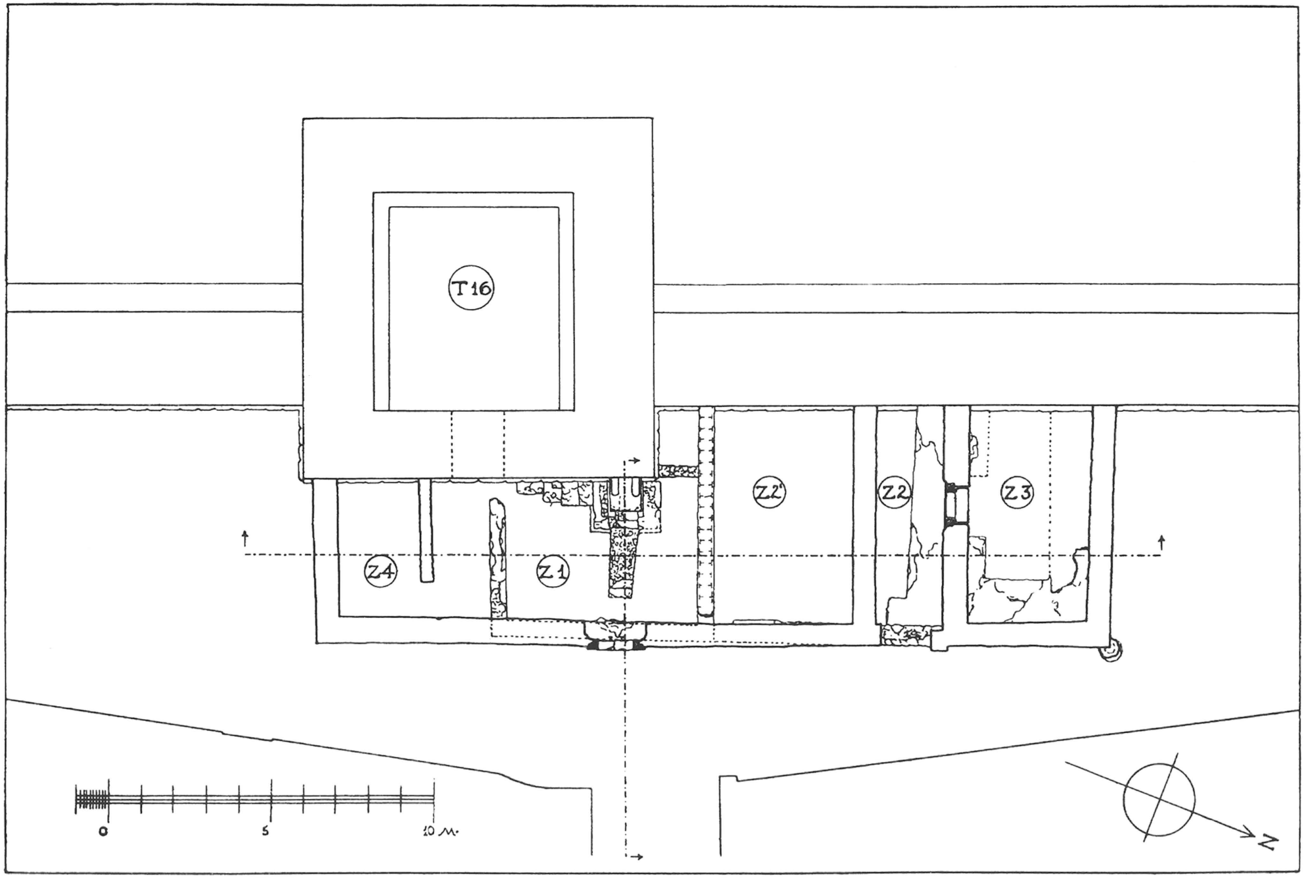

T16
Z2'
Z2
Z3
Z4
Z1
0
5
10 m.
N

Fig. 6 Ground plan of the temple of Zeus Kyrios-Baalshamin in Dura-Europos.

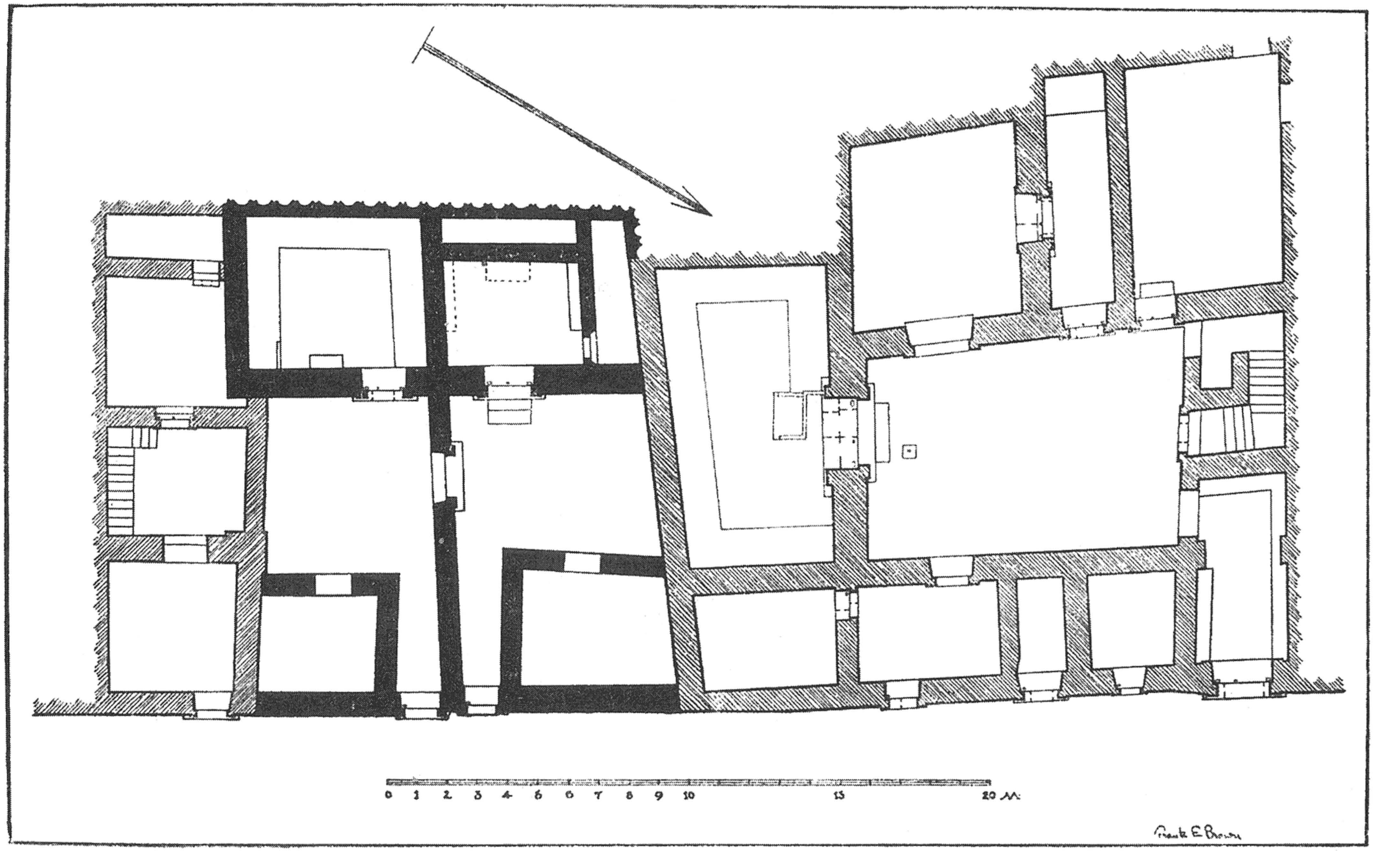

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 15 20 M.
Frank E Brown

Fig. 7 Ground plan of the temple of the Gaddê in Dura-Europos, *ca.* 50-150 CE.

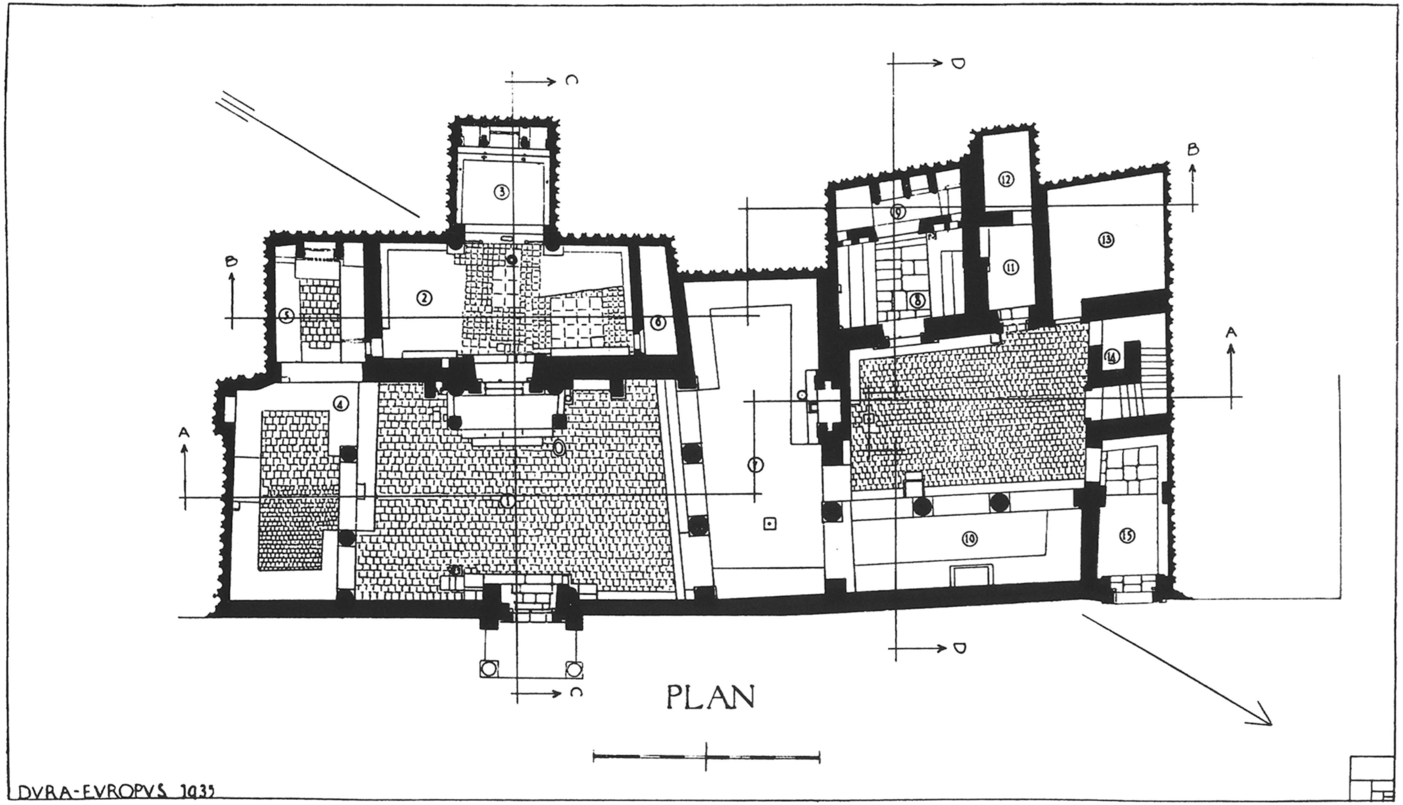

C
C
D
D
B
B
A
A
③
②
⑤
④
①
⑥
⑦
⑨
⑧
⑫
⑪
⑬
⑭
⑩
⑮
PLAN
DVRA-EVROPVS 1935

Fig. 8 Ground plan of the temple of the Gaddê in Dura-Europos, *ca.* 150-256 CE.

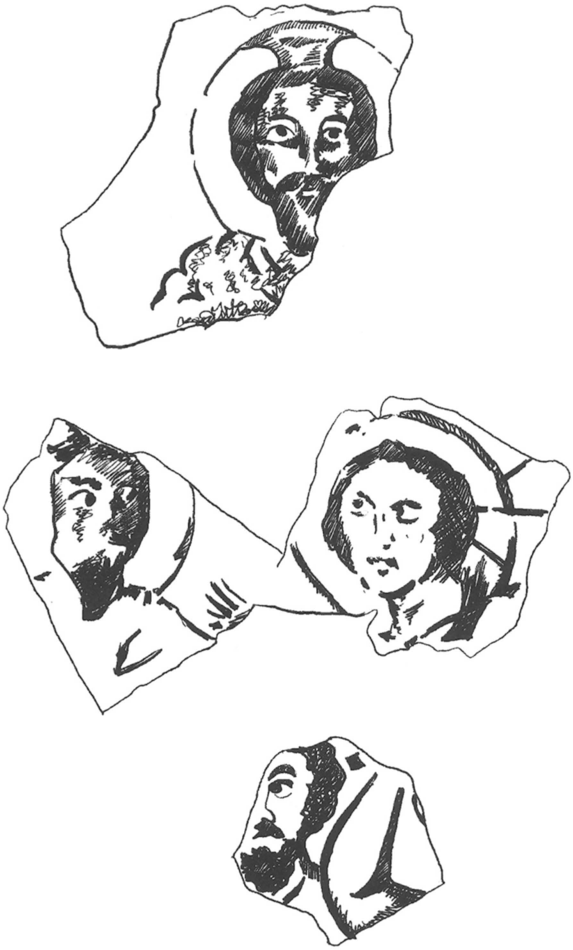


Fig. 9 Fragments of wall paintings from the pronaos of the temple of the Gaddê.

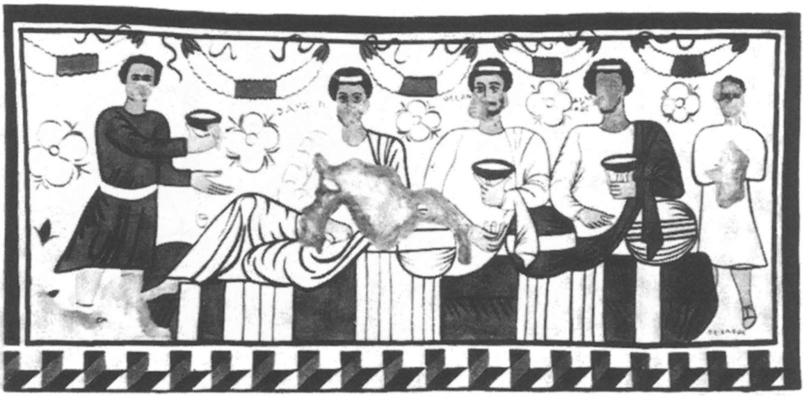


Fig. 10 Wall painting depicting a men's banquet, dated 194 CE.

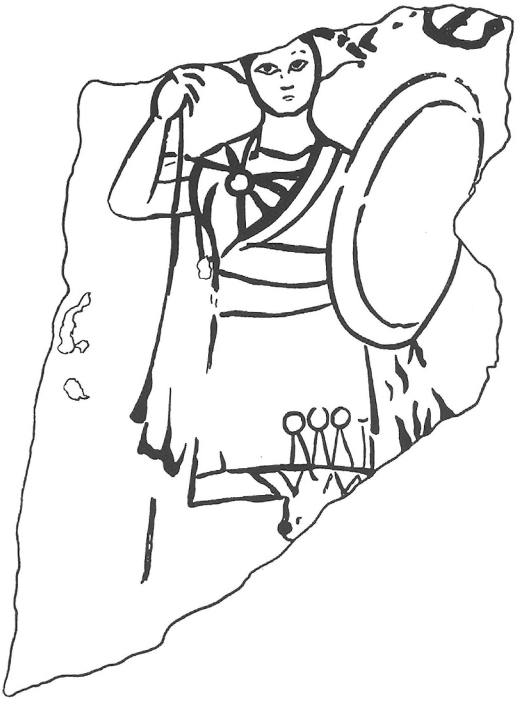
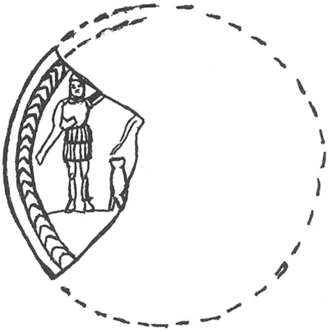


Fig. 11 Fresco fragment depicting a military god (Arṣu).



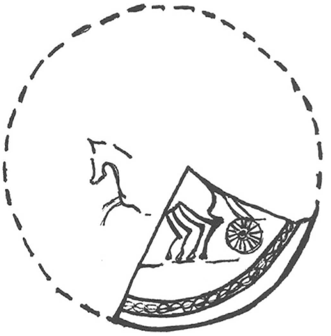


Fig. 12 Fragment of a round common-ware mould.

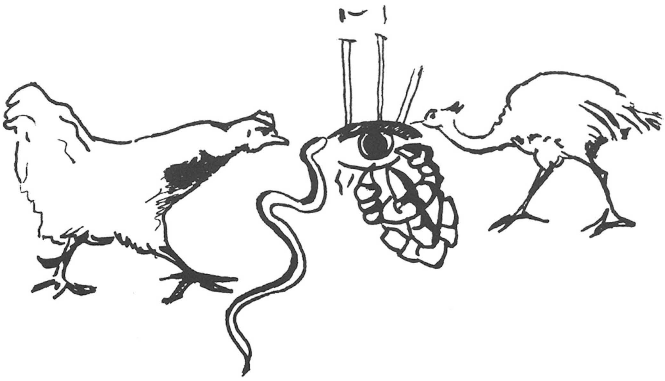


Fig. 13 Drawing of the evil eye from the *diwan* of the 'house of the banquet'.

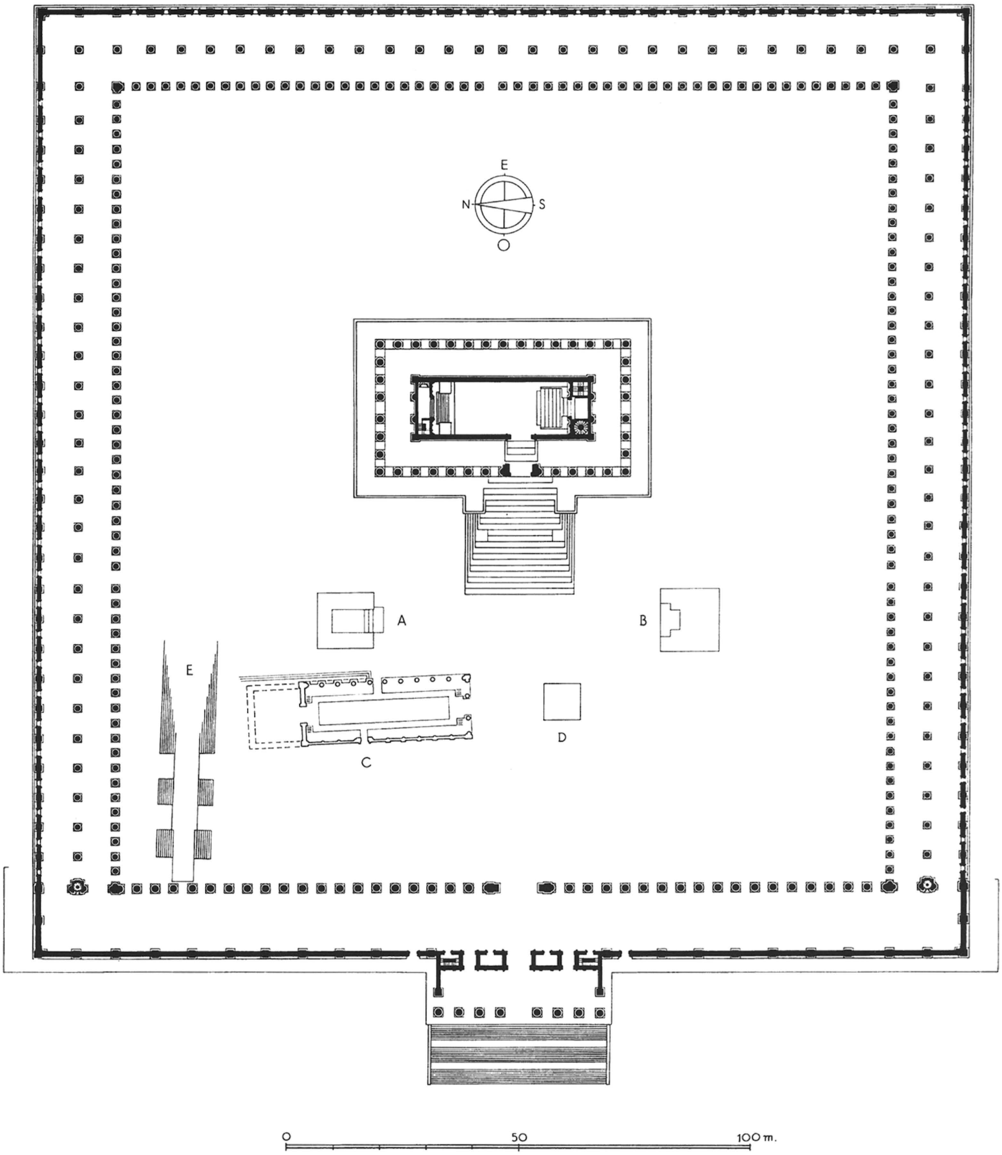

E
N
S
O
A
B
E
C
D
0
50
100 m.

Fig. 14 Ground plan of the temple of Bel in Palmyra.

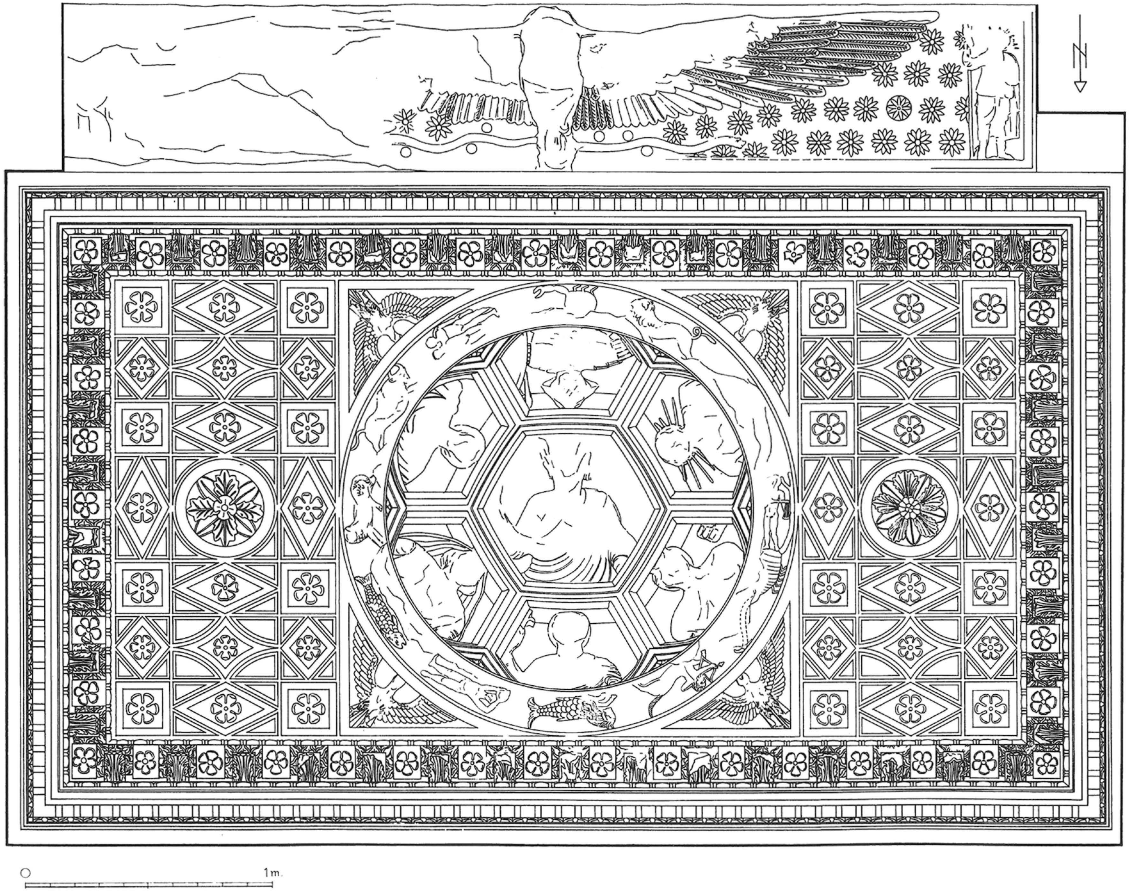


Fig. 15 Lintel and ceiling of the northern *thalamos* of the temple of Bel.

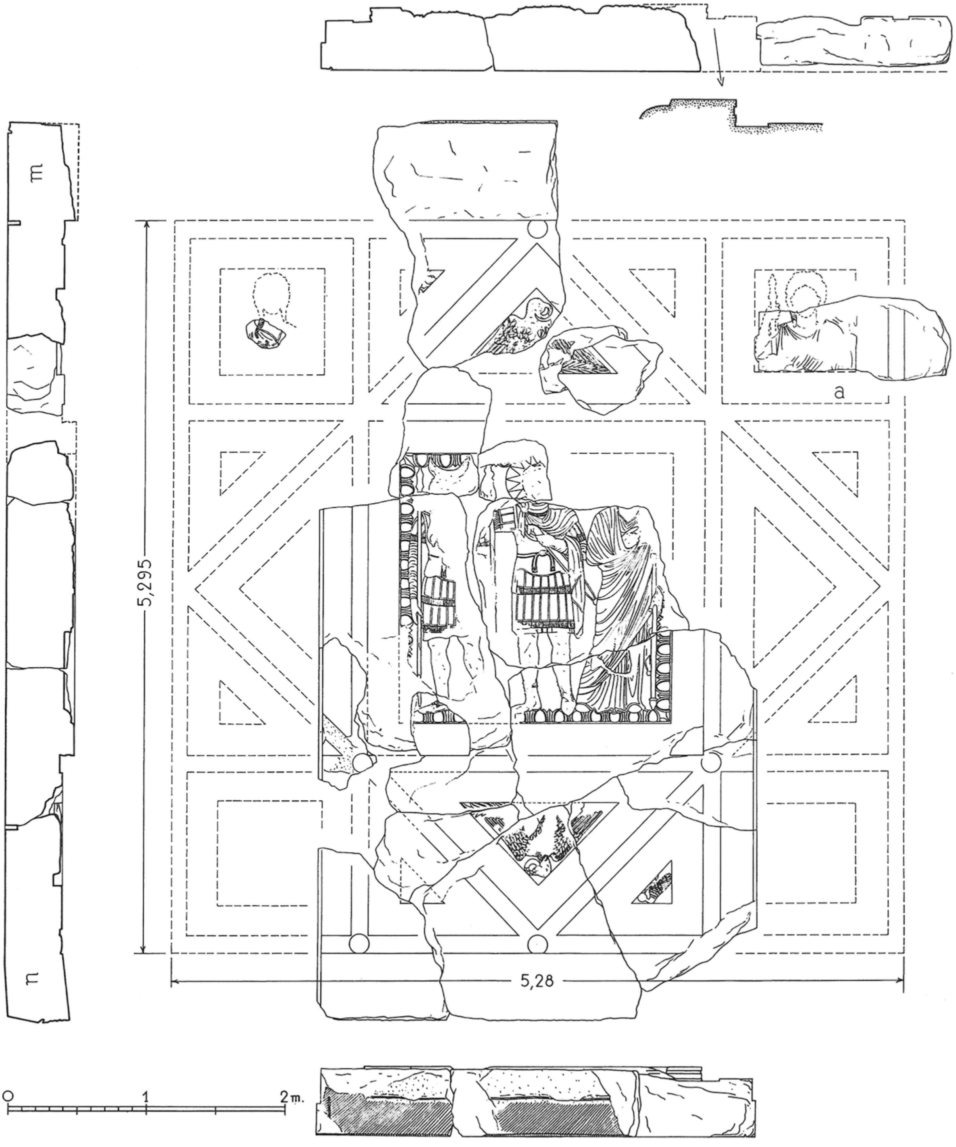

m
n
a
5,295
5,28
0
1
2 m.

Fig. 16 Relief representing Iarḥibol, Aglibol and Astarte.

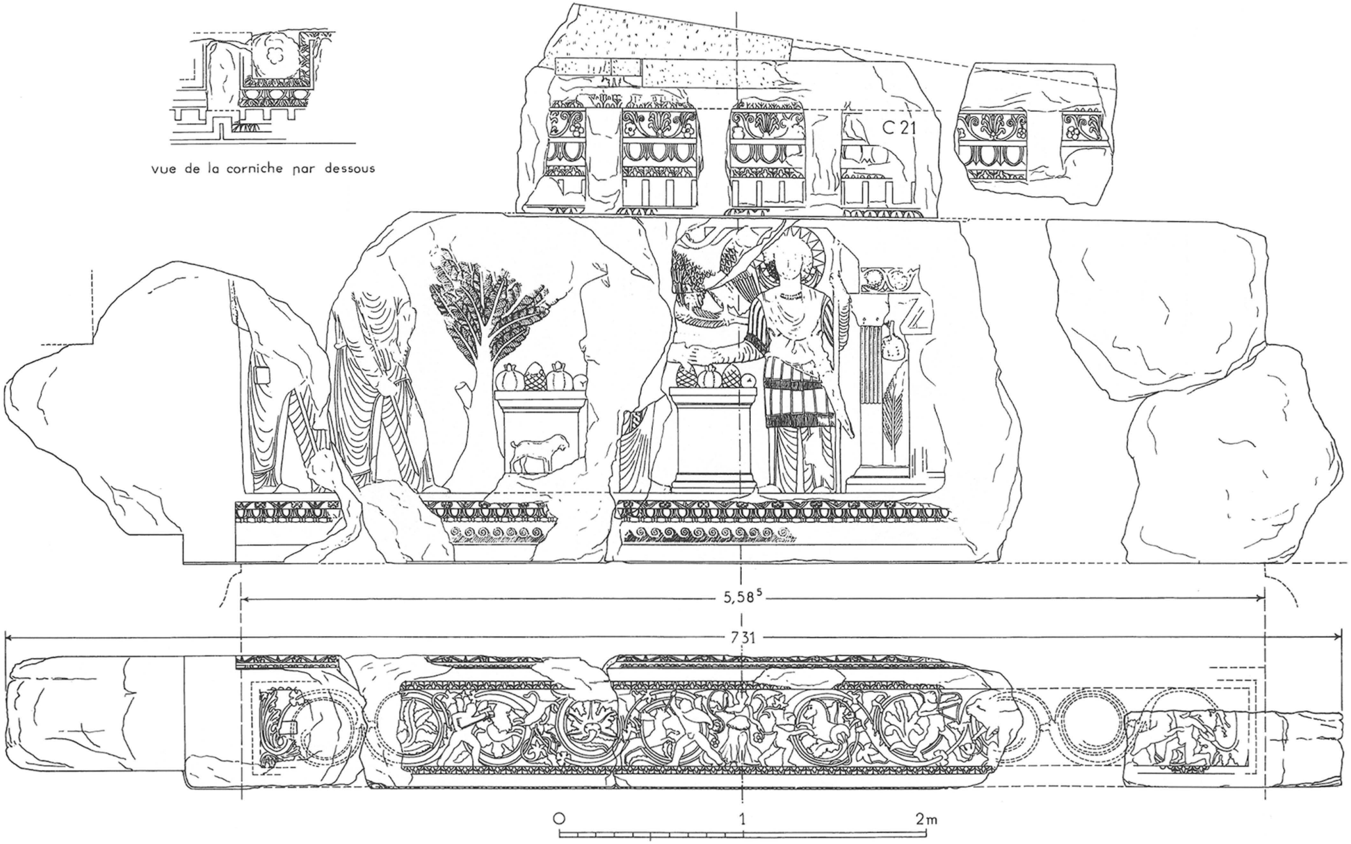

vue de la corniche par dessous
C 21
5,58⁵
731
0
1
2m

Fig. 17 Relief representing Aglibol and Malakbel on a beam from the peristyle of the cella of the temple of Bel in Palmyra.

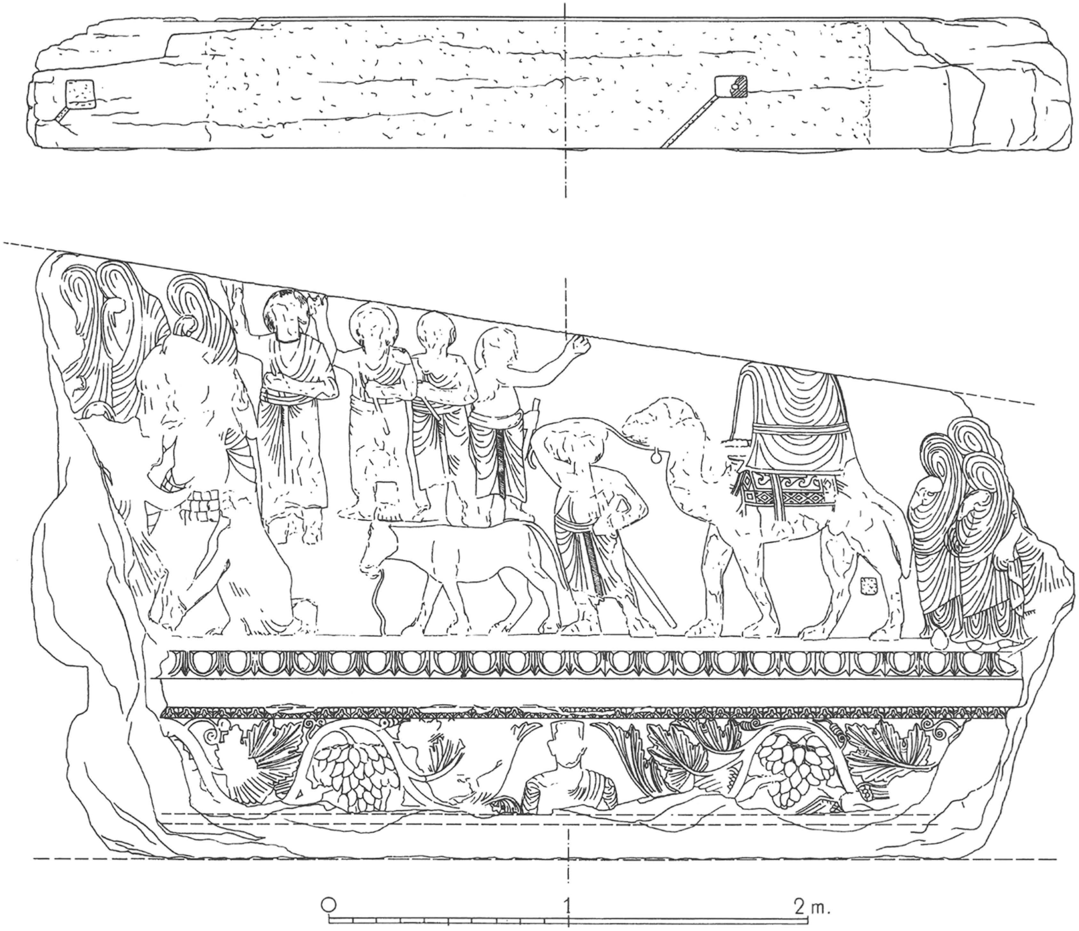


Fig. 18 Relief representing the arrival of Allat in Palmyra.

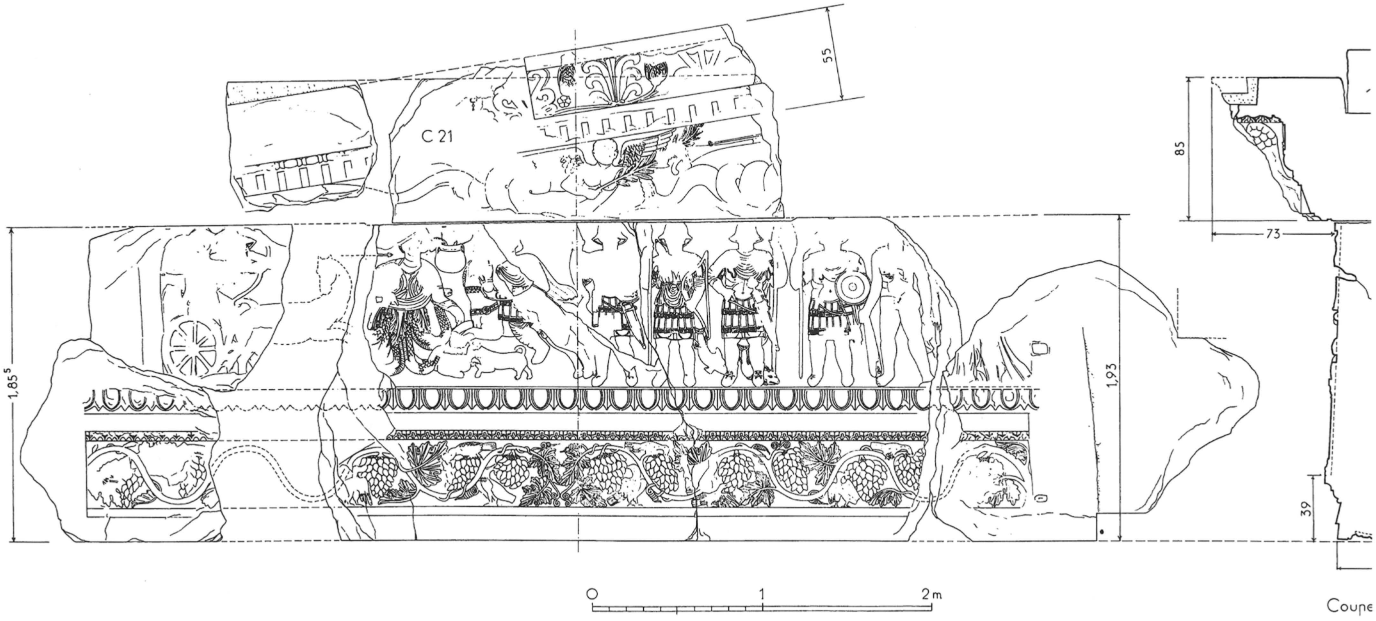
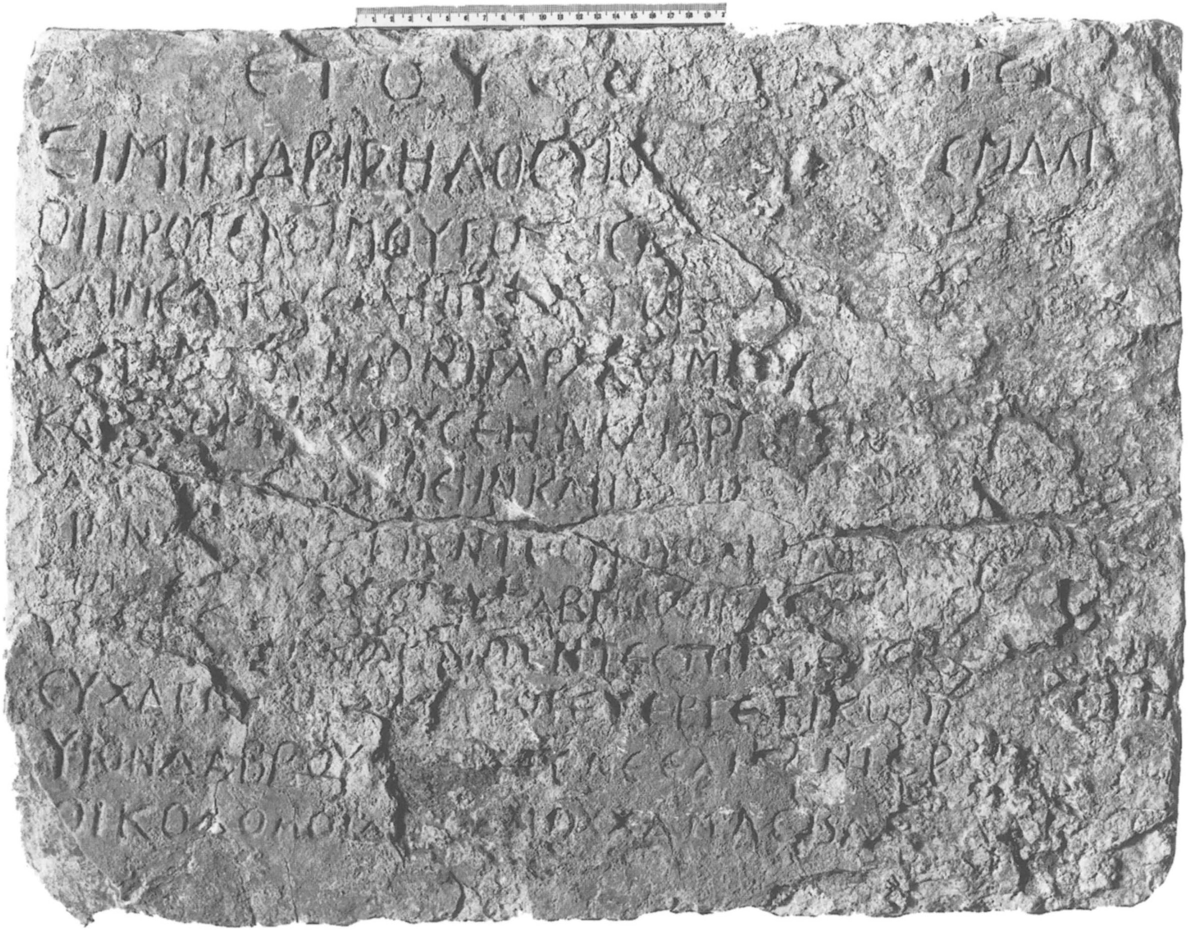
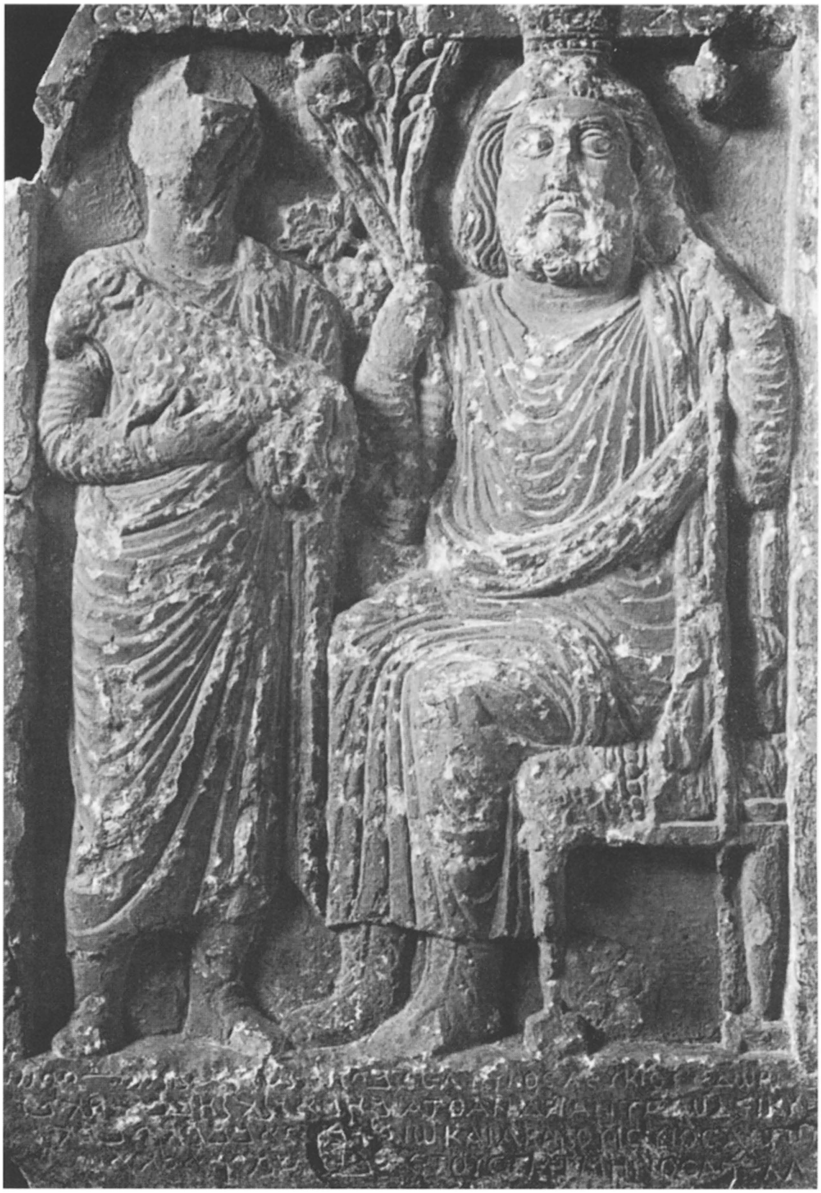

55
C 21
85
73
1,85⁵
1,93
39
0
1
2 m
Coupe

Fig. 19 Relief representing the battle of Nabû and Bel with the chaos monster Tiamat.

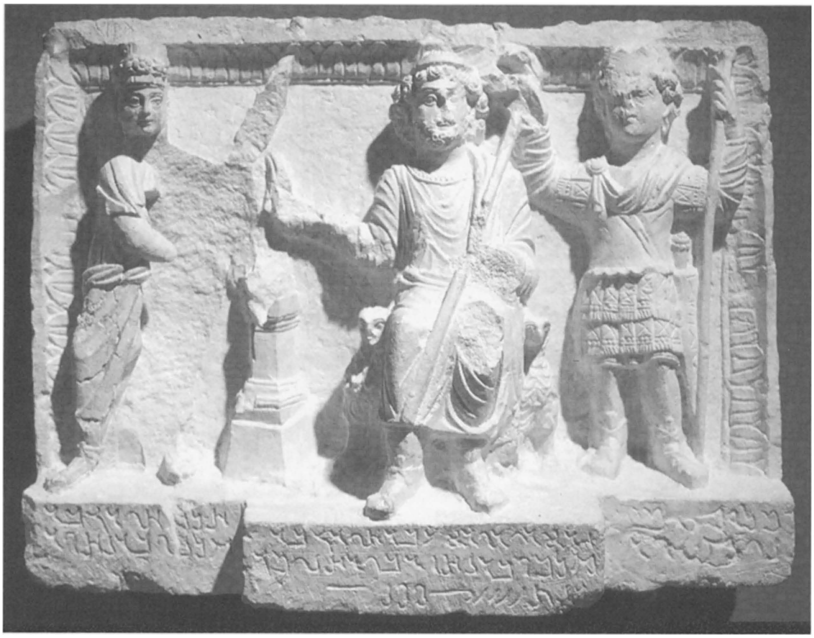
PLATES



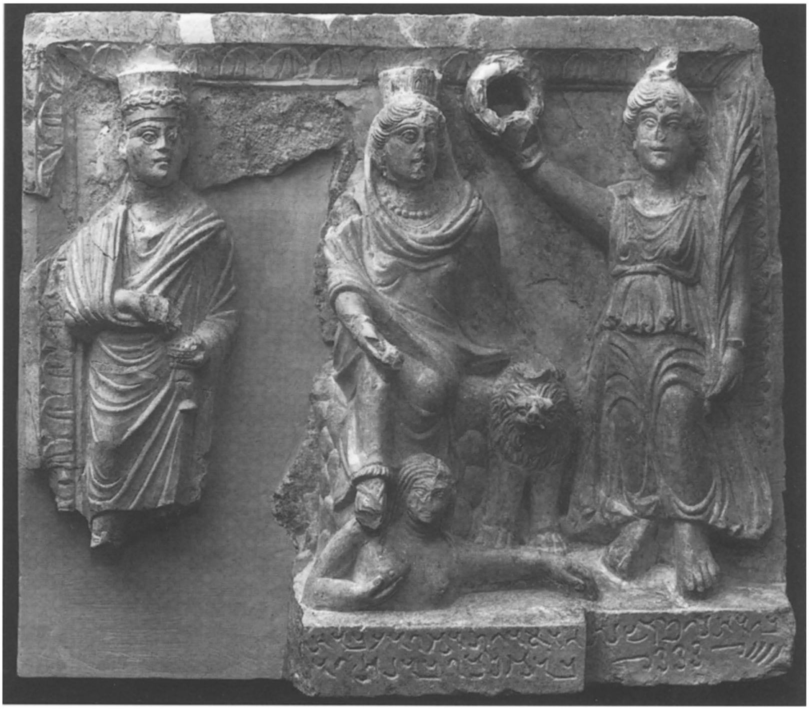
I Greek inscription from the temple in the necropolis of Dura-Europos, 173 CE (?).



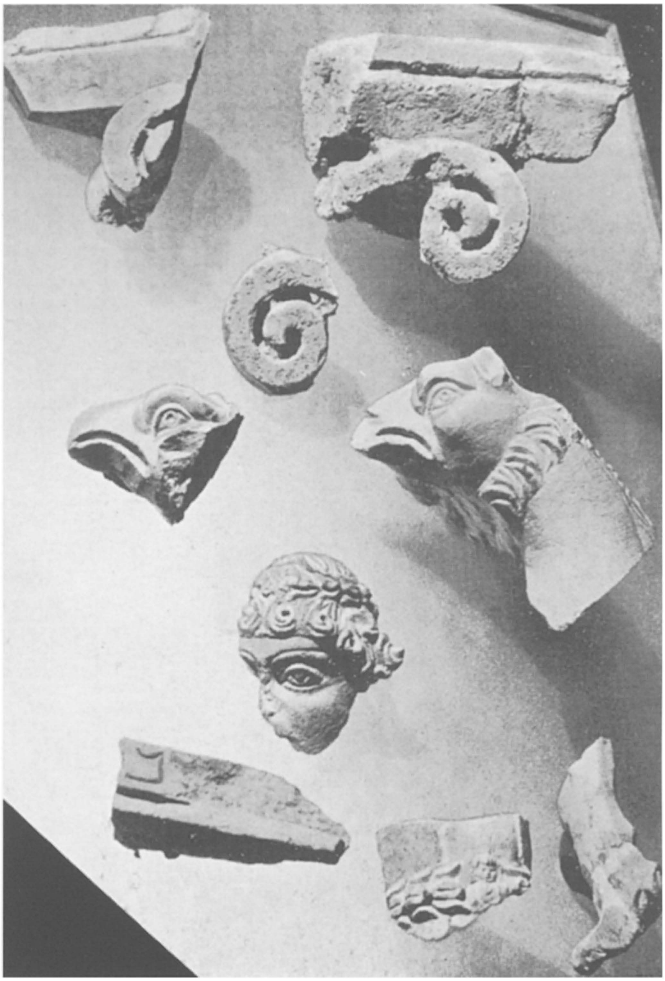
II Relief depicting Zeus Kyrios-Baalshamin dated 31 CE.



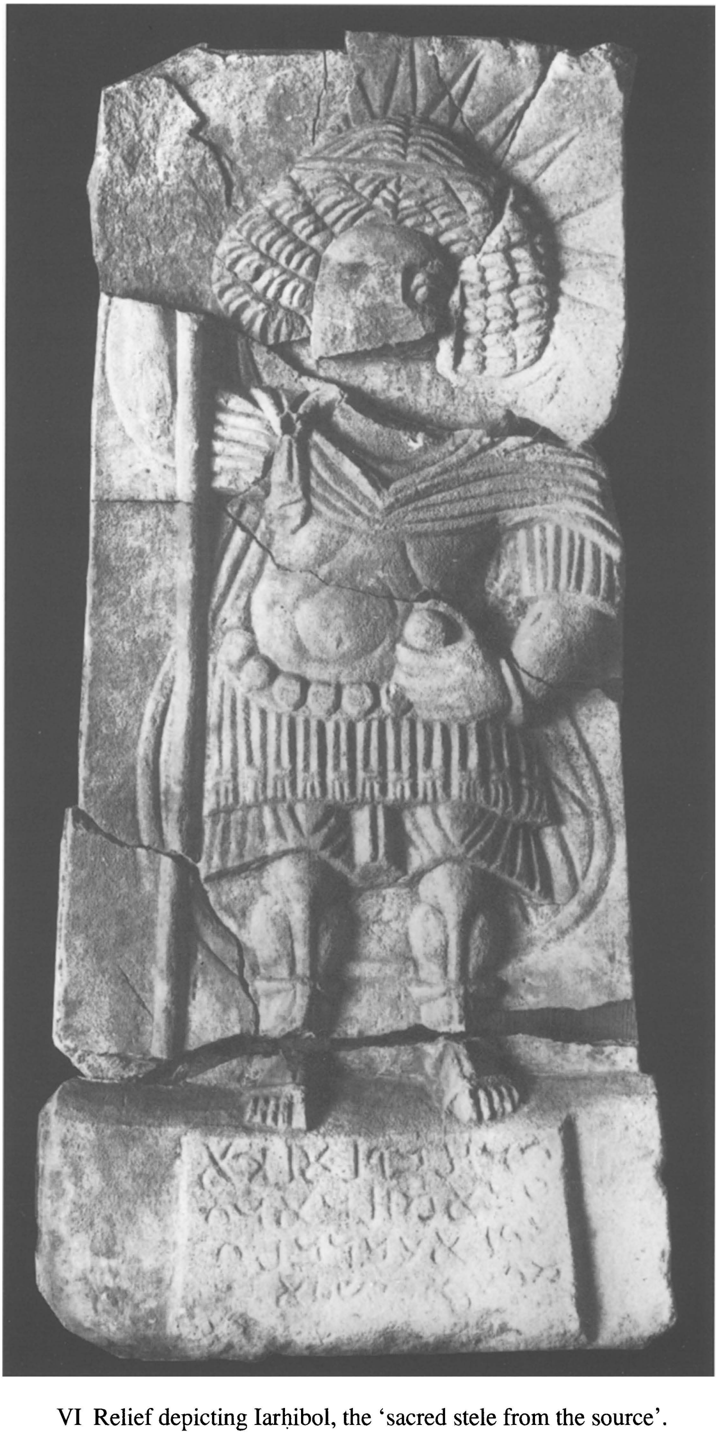
III Relief depicting the Gad of Dura dated 159 CE.



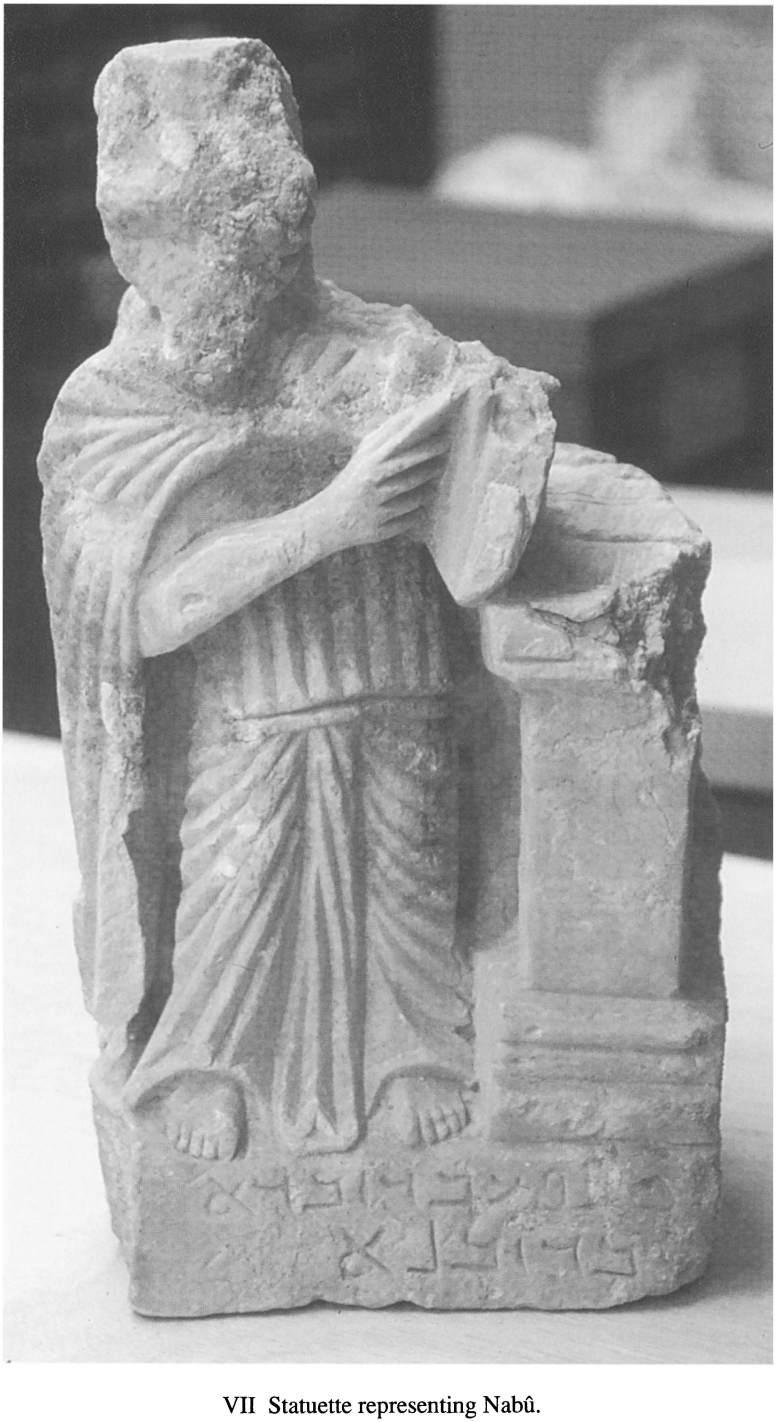
IV Relief depicting the Gad of Tadmor dated 159 CE.



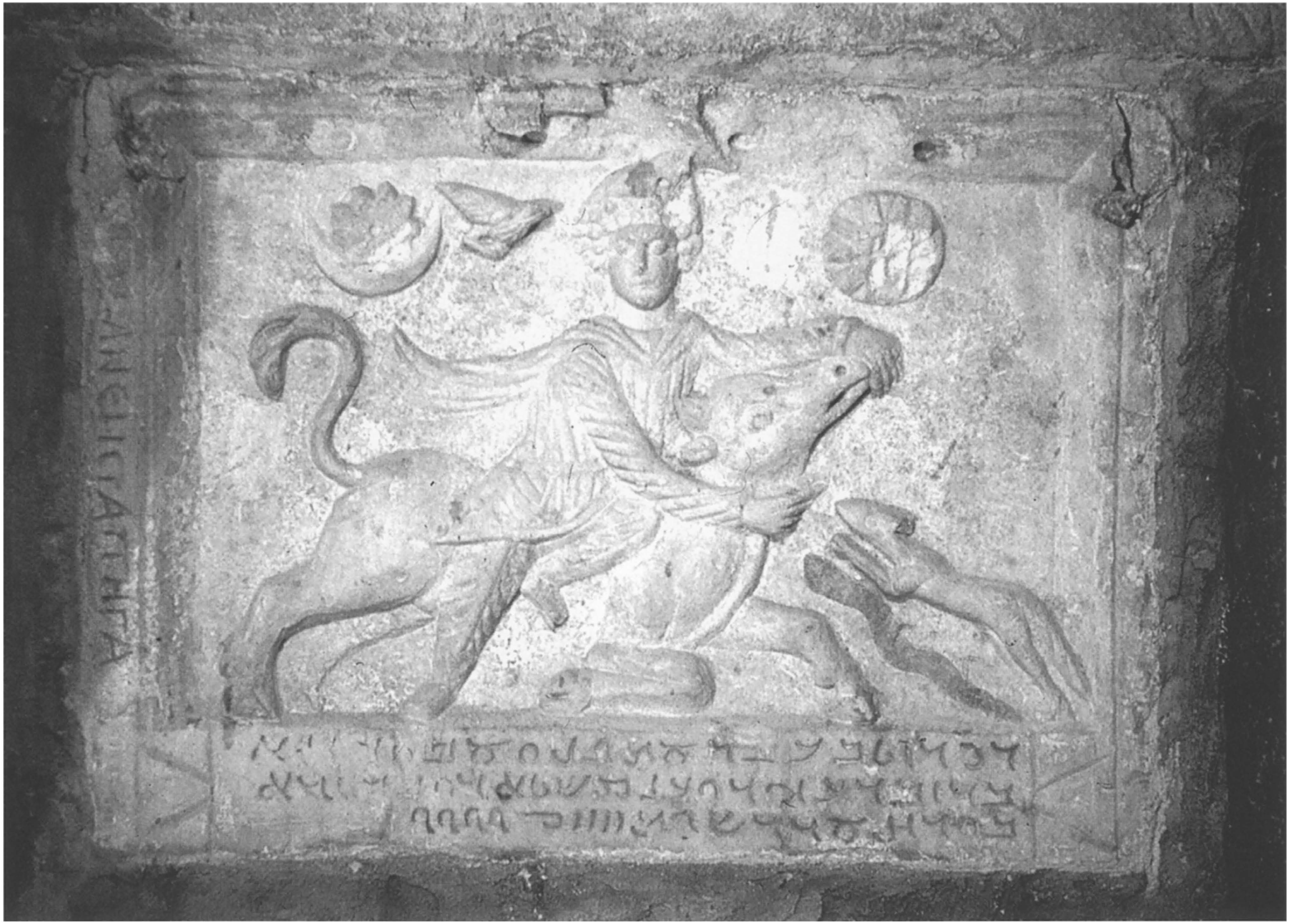
V Fragments of a relief depicting Malakbel.



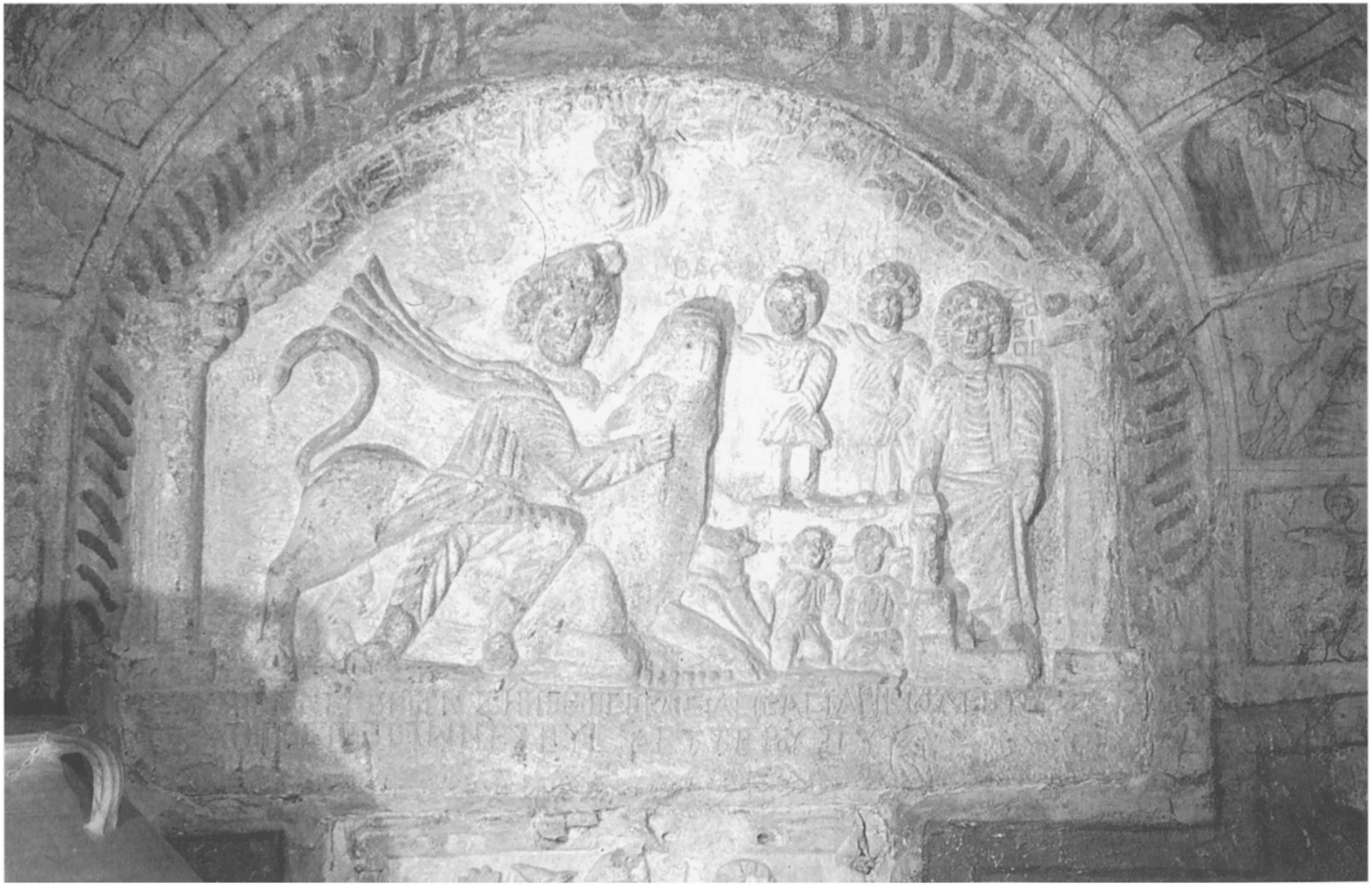
VI Relief depicting Iarḥibol, the ‘sacred stele from the source’.



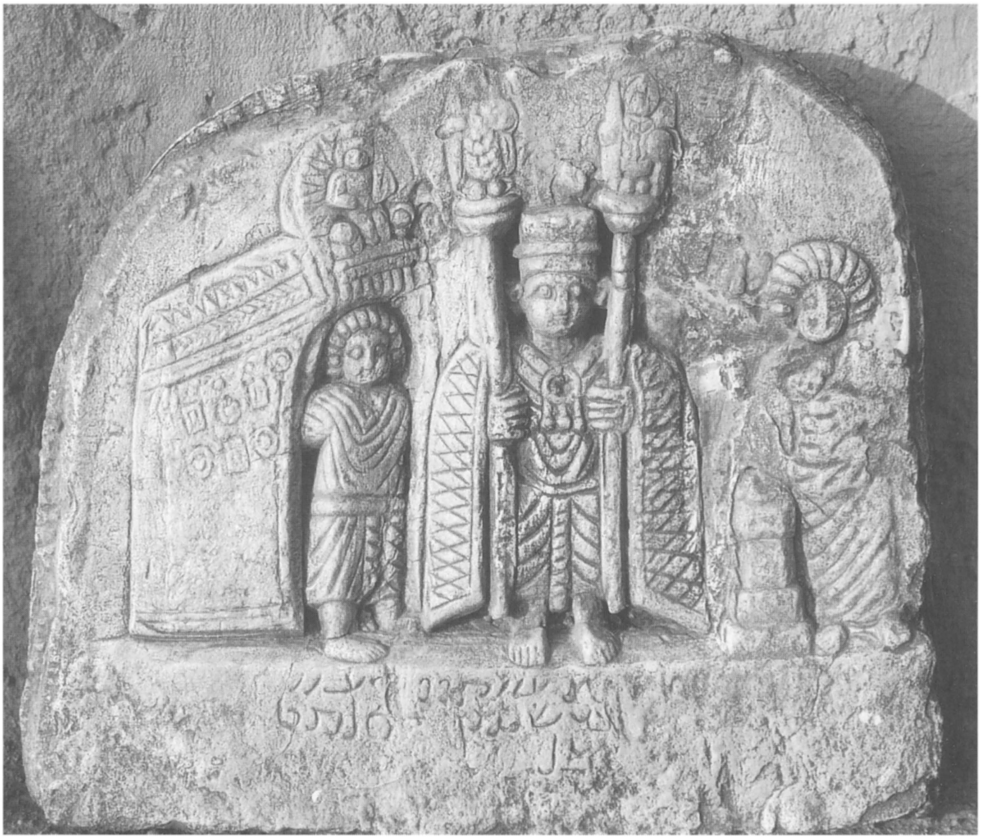
VII Statuette representing Nabû.



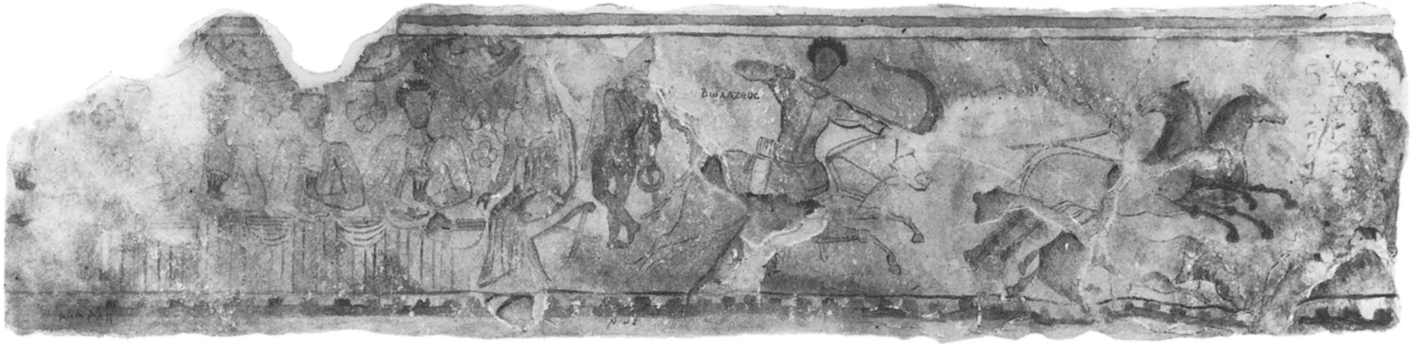
VIII Mithraic relief from the Dura Mithraeum dated 168-169 CE.



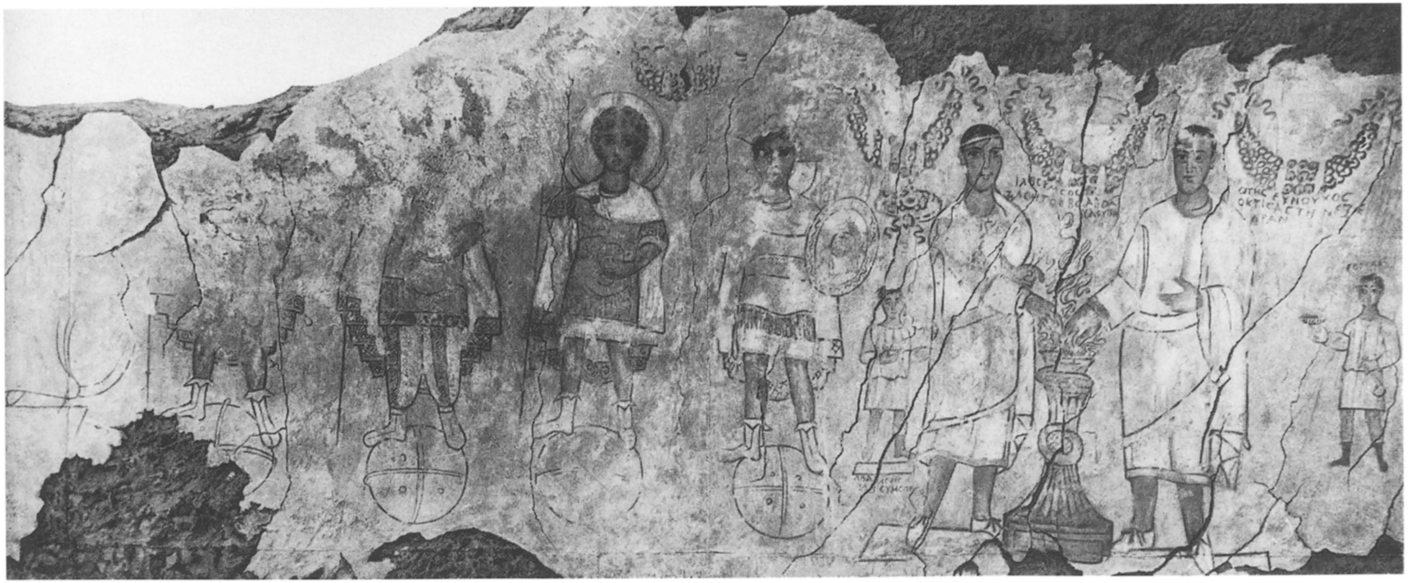
IX Mithraic relief from the Dura Mithraeum dated 170-171 CE.



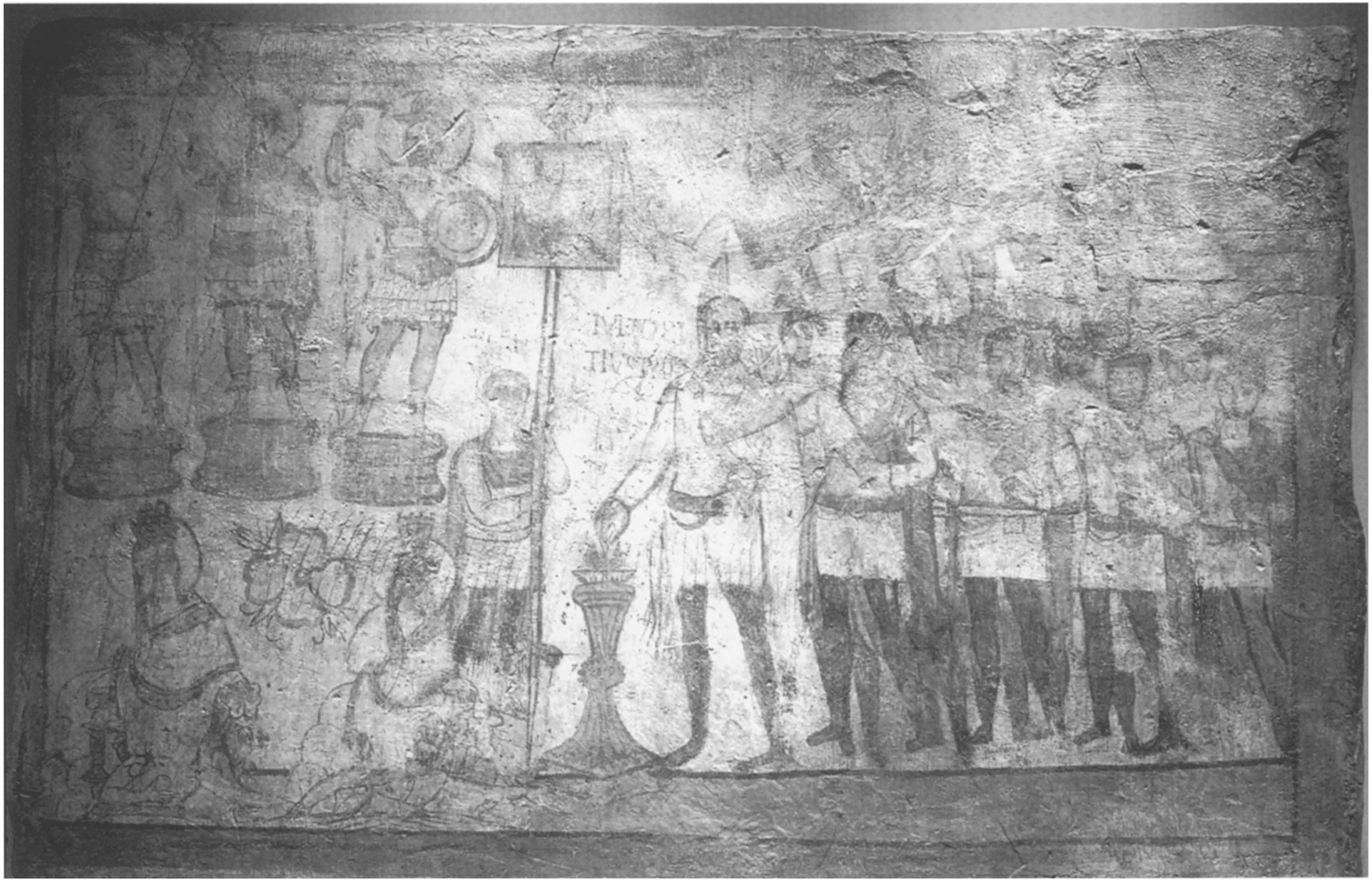
X Relief dedicated to Bel dated 173-174 CE from a building in block M5.



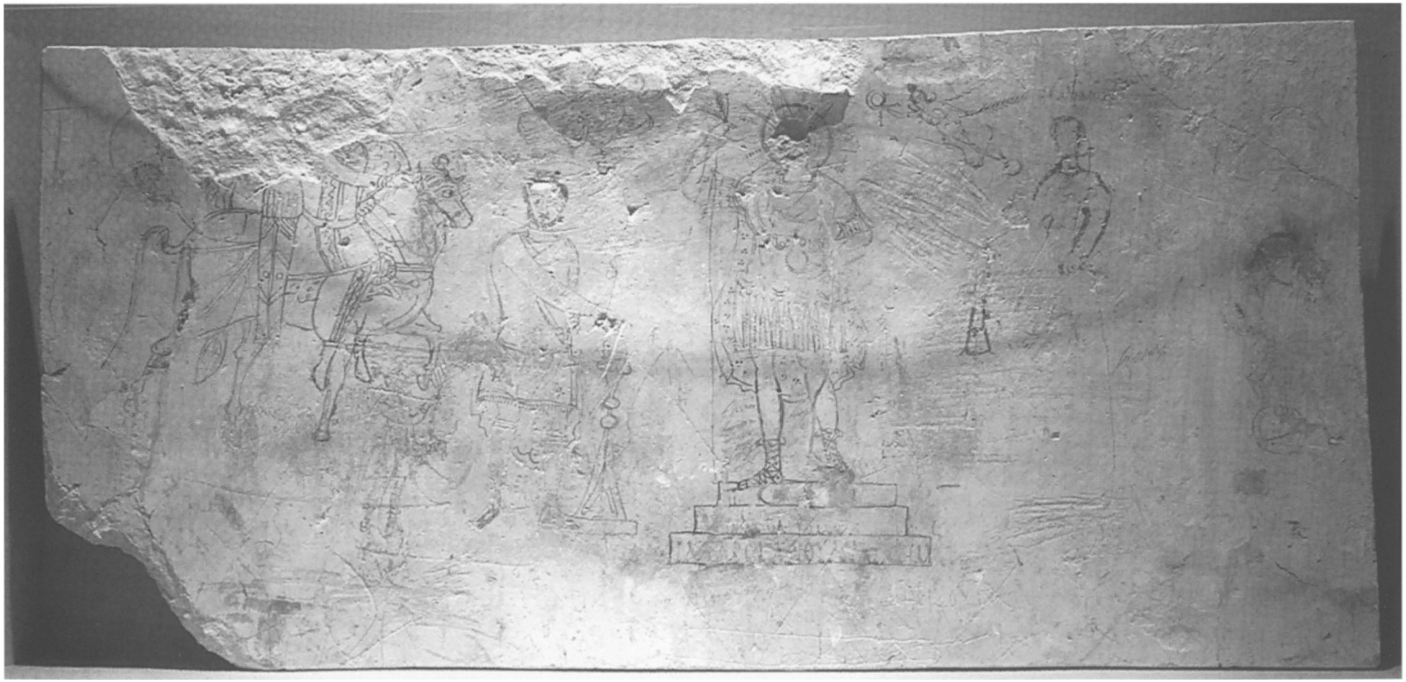
XI Wall painting representing a banquet and hunting scene, dated 194 CE.



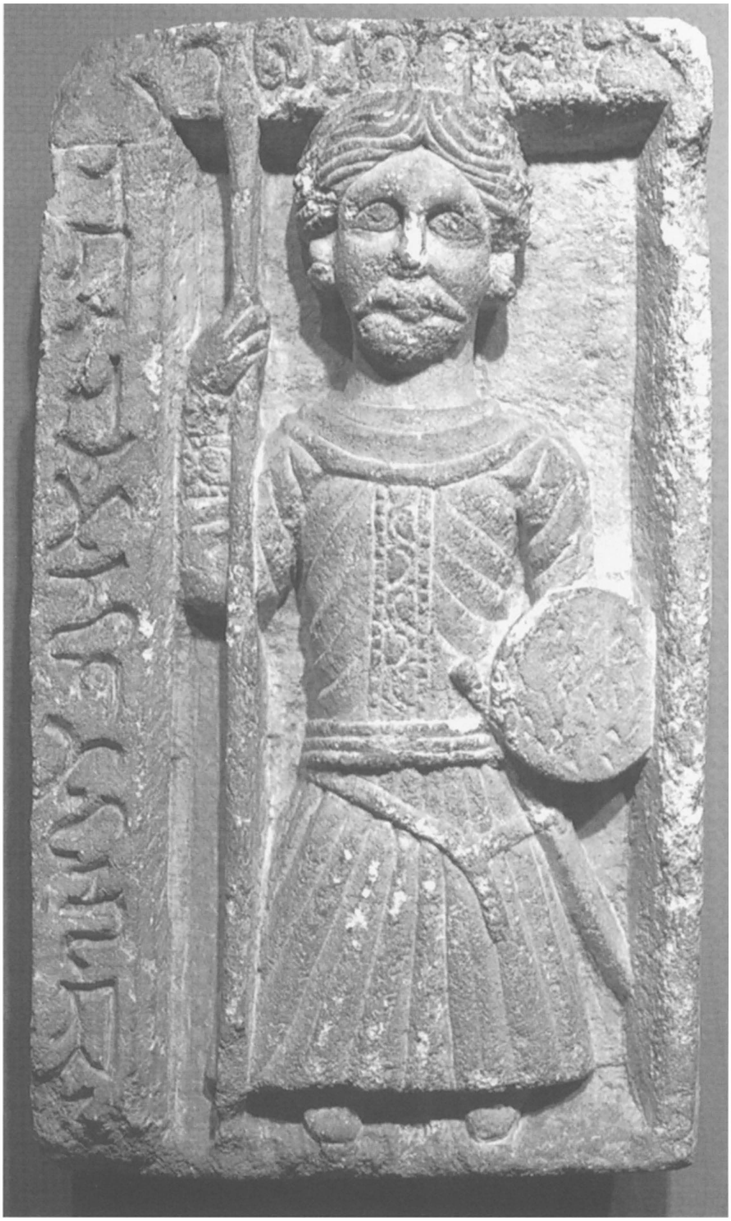
XII Fresco depicting the sacrifice of the eunuch Otes to five Palmyrene deities.



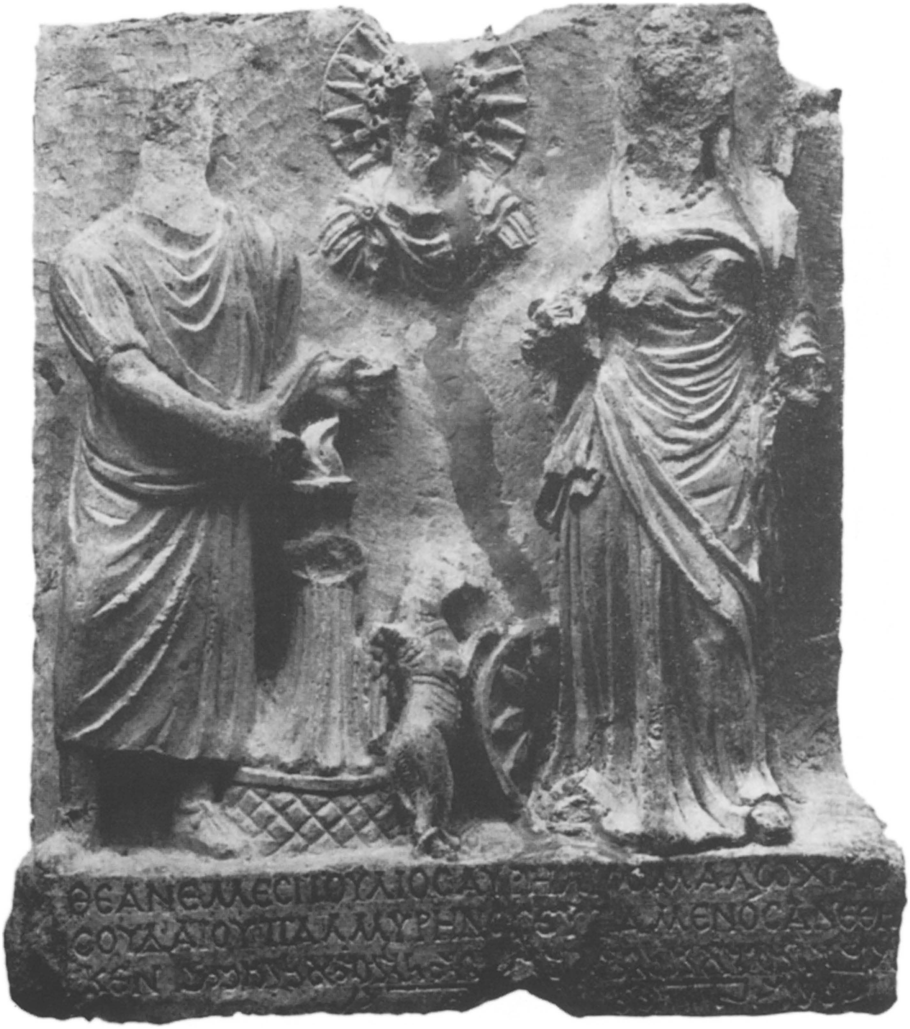
XIII Fresco representing the sacrifice of the tribune Julius Terentius and members of the Cohors XX Palmyrenorum to three Palmyrene deities and the Tychai of Dura and Palmyra.



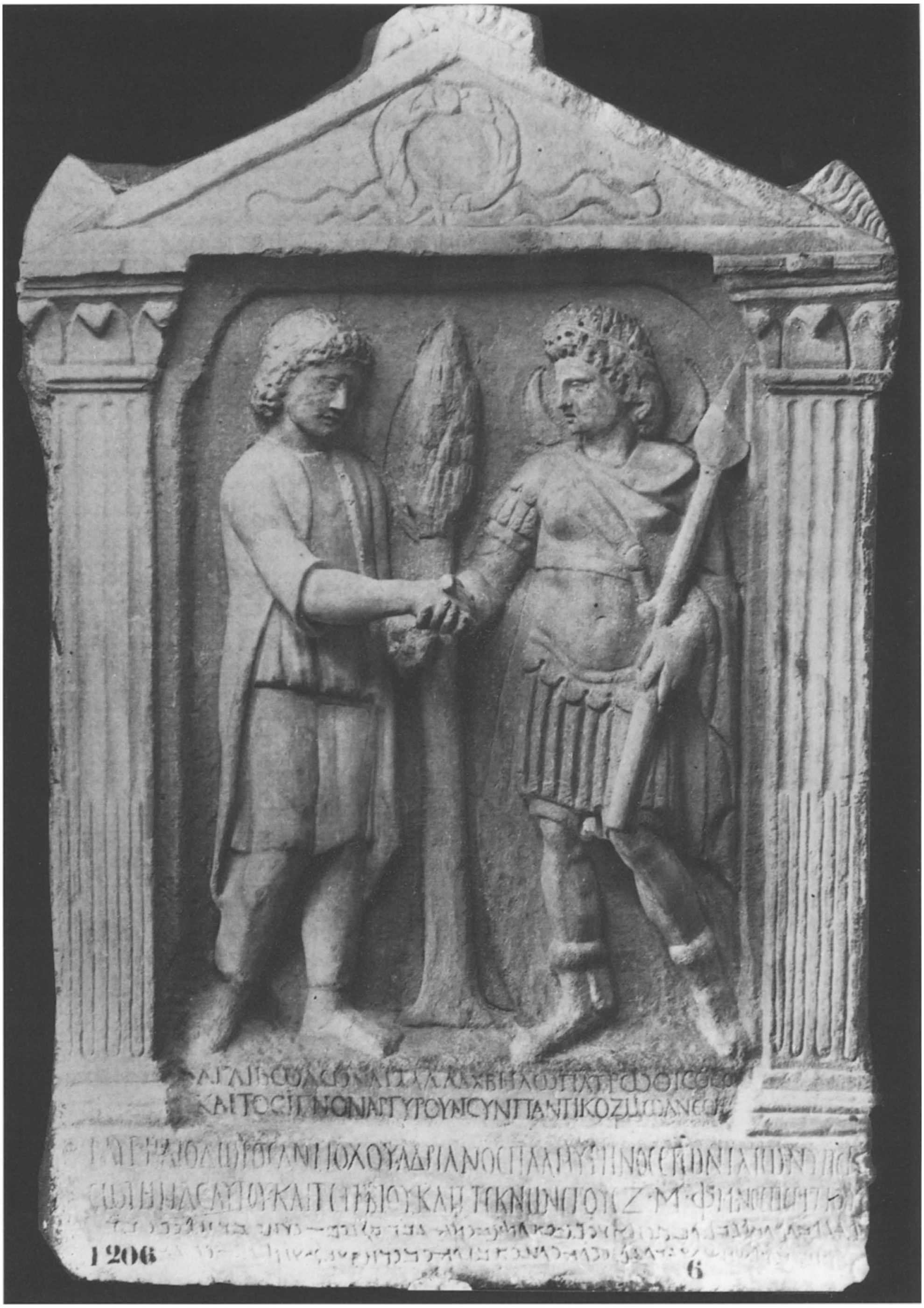
XIV Ink drawing representing Iarḥibol from the praetorium in the temple of Azzanathkona.



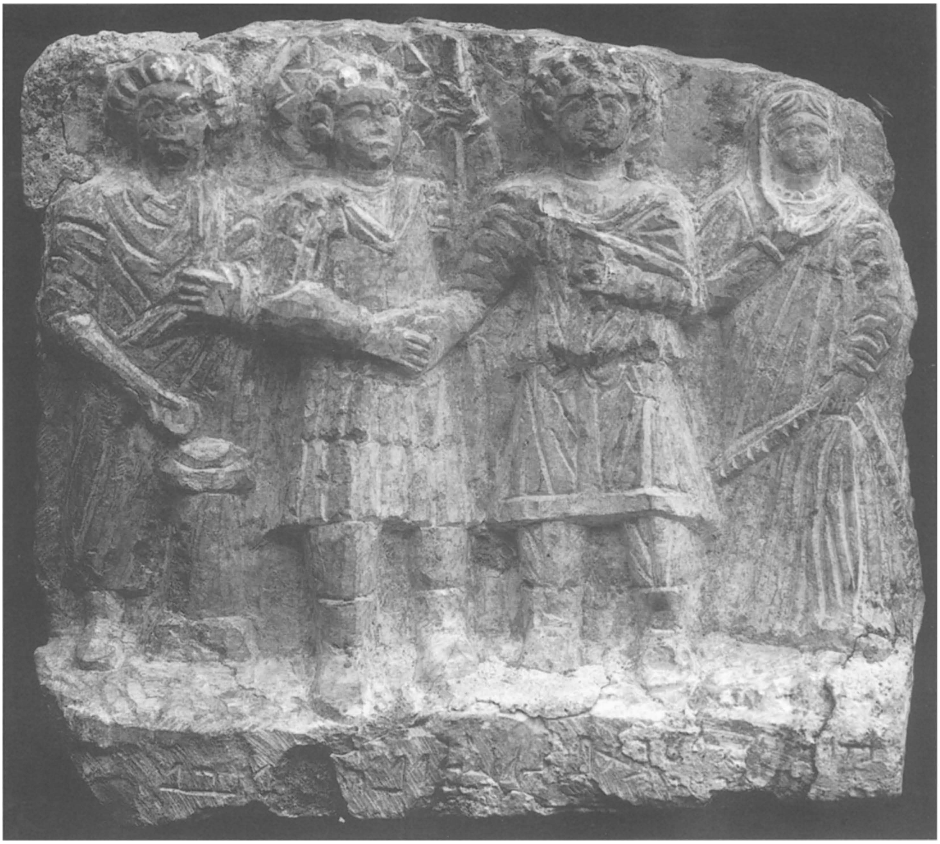
XV Relief representing Arṣu from the temple of Zeus Megistos in Dura-Europos.



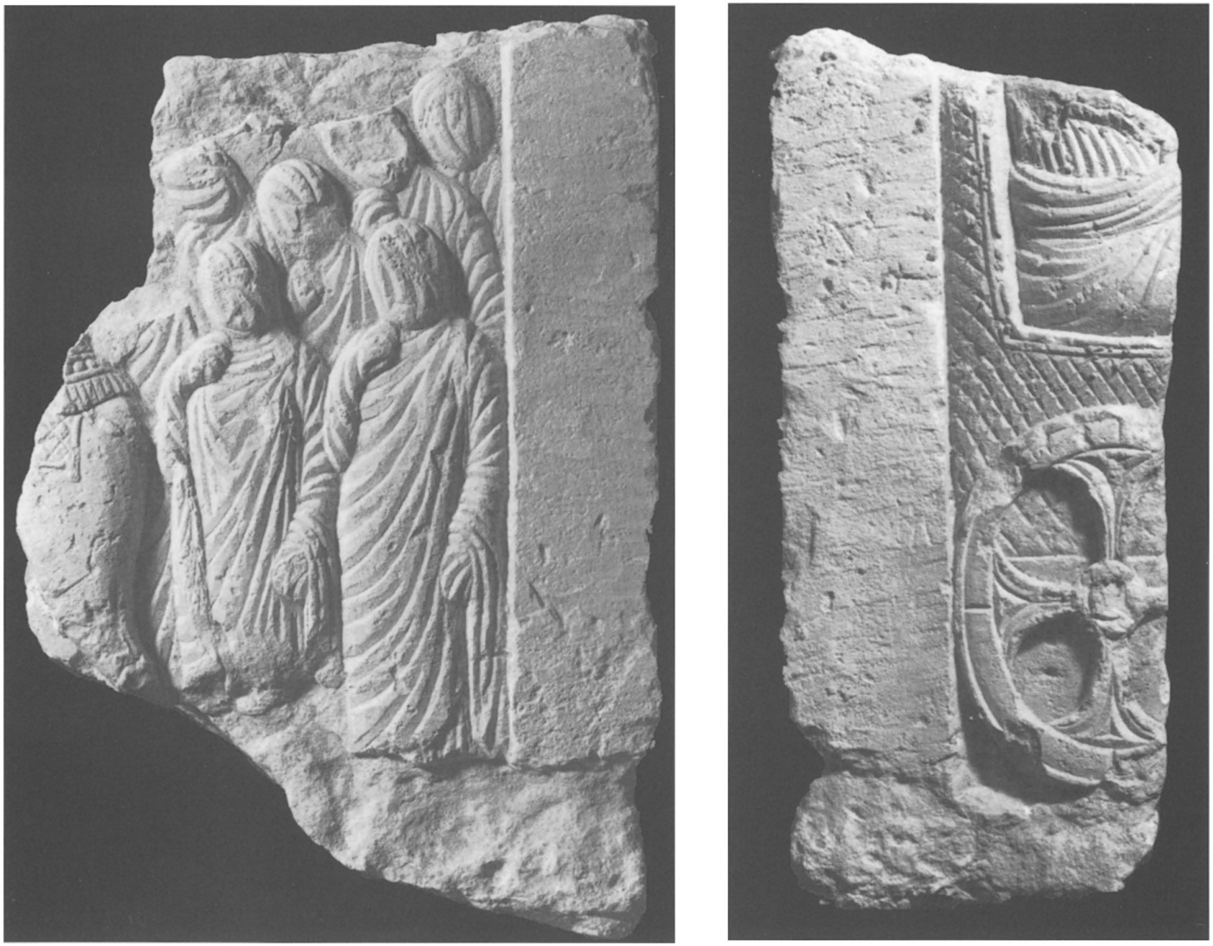
XVI Relief dedicated to Nemesis, dated 245 CE.



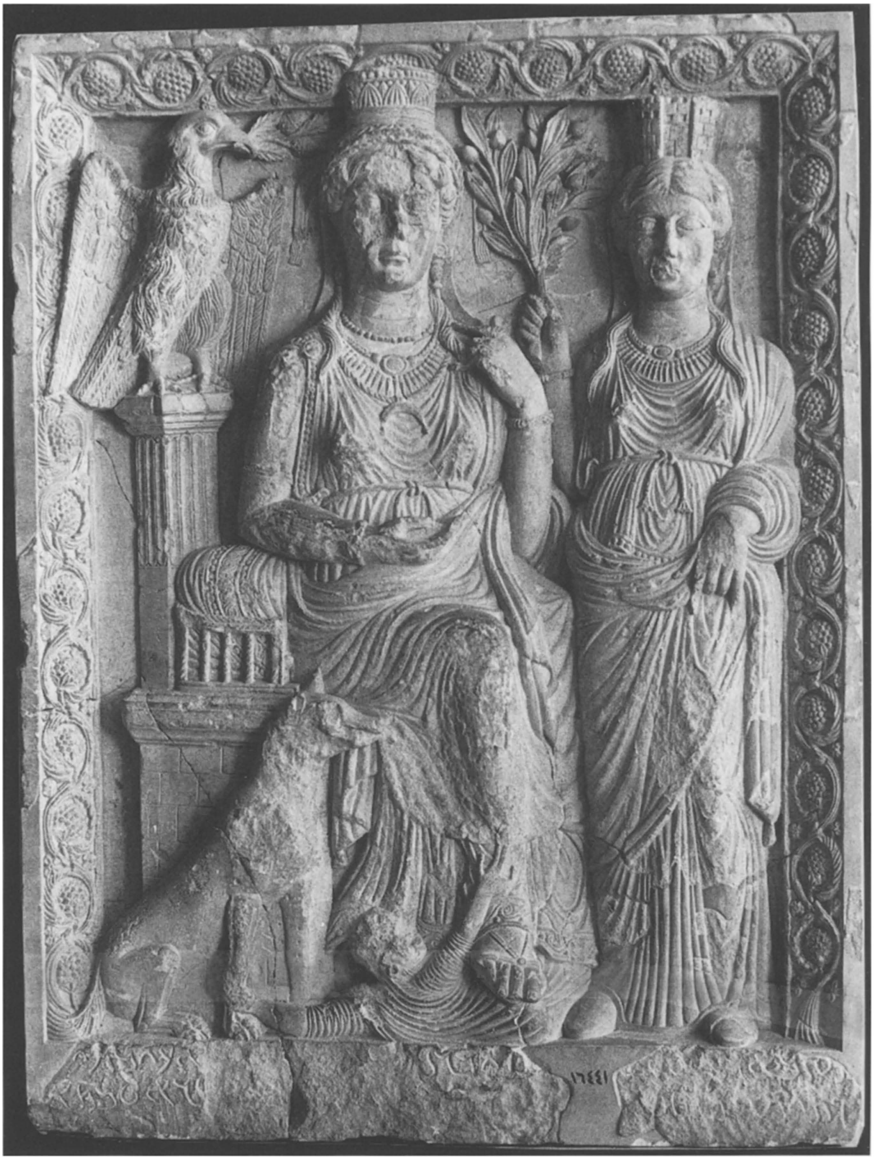
XVII Relief representing Aglibol and Malakbel, dated 236 CE, from Rome.



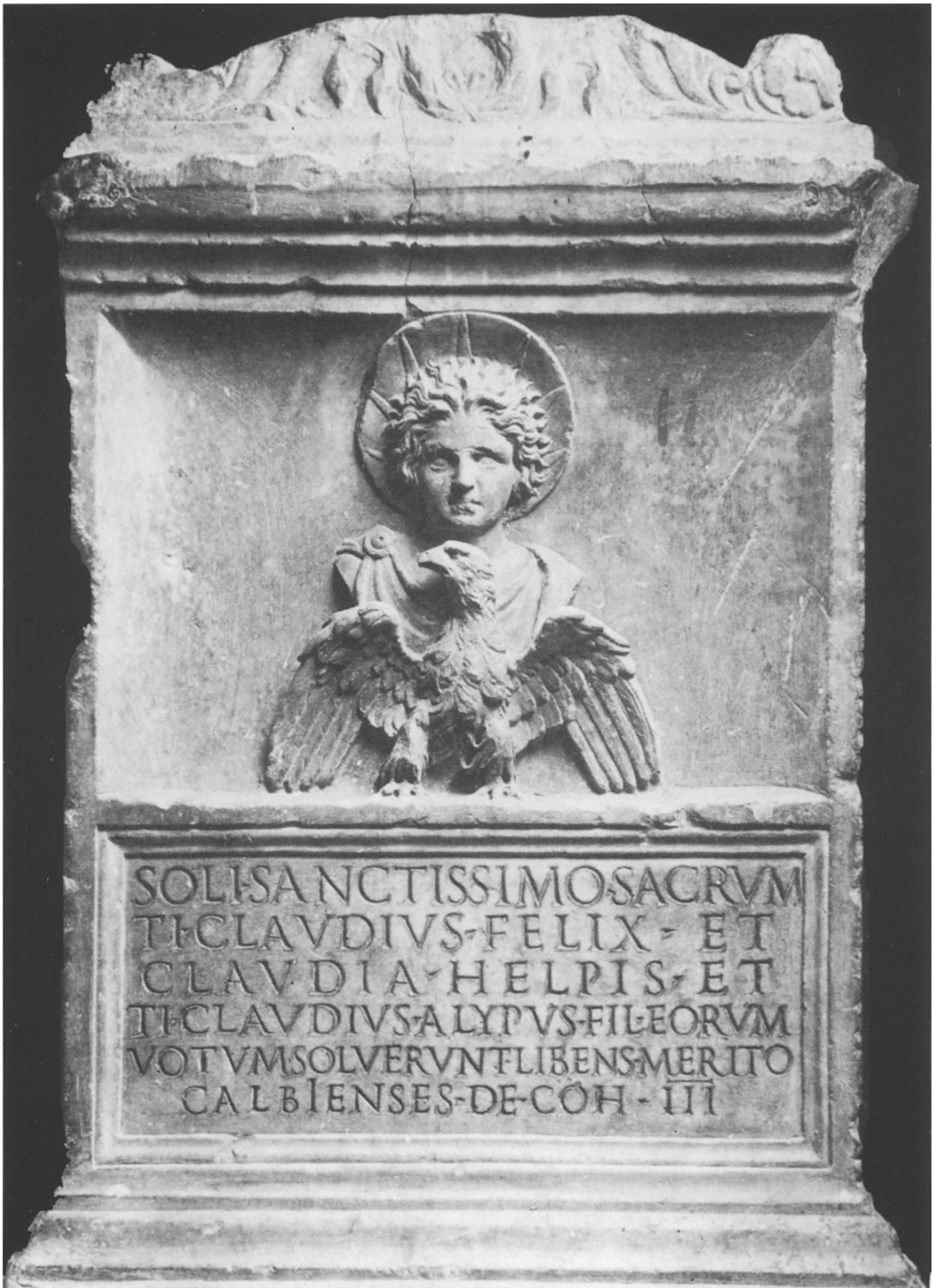
XVIII Relief representing Aglibol and Malakbel (n.d.), from Khirbet Ramadan in the Palmyrène.



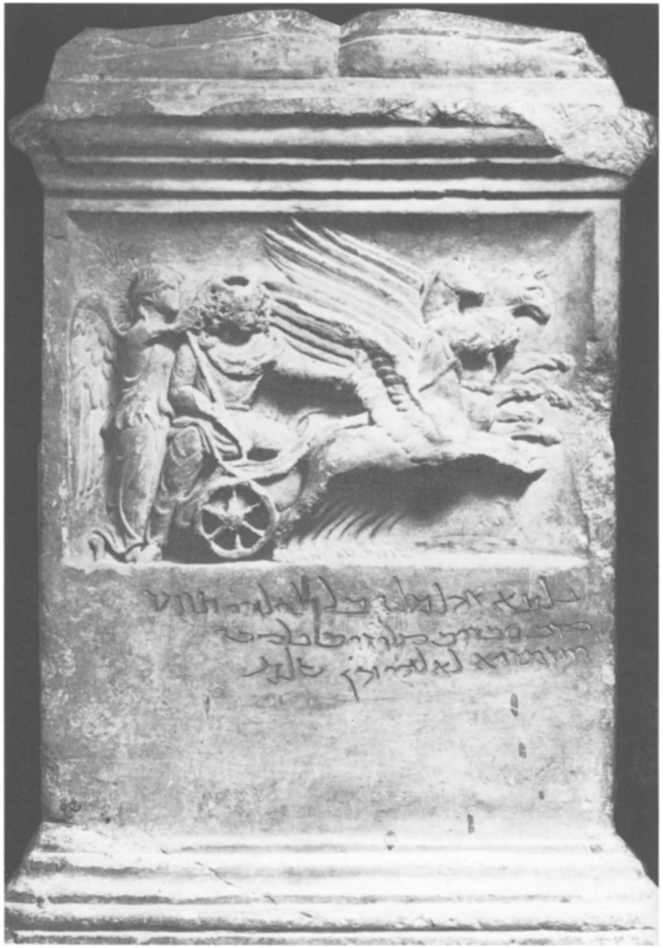
XIX Architectural element from the temple of Allat in Palmyra, representing a procession of veiled women, and a chariot with a cult statue.



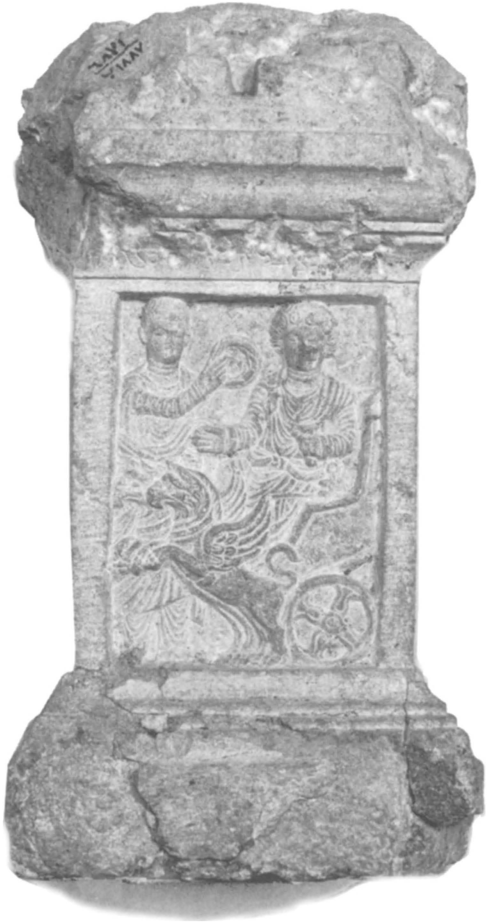
XX Relief representing a goddess with dog from Palmyra.


SOLI·SANCTISSIMO·SACRVM
TI·CLAVDIVS·FELIX·ET
CLAVDIA·HELPIS·ET
TI·CLAVDIVS·ALYPVS·FIL·EORVM
VOTVM SOLVERVNT·LIBENS·MERITO
CALBIENSES·DE·COH·III

XXI Front of the altar dedicated to *Sol Sanctissimus* from Rome.



XXII Left-hand side of the altar dedicated to *Sol Sanctissimus* from Rome.



XXIII Front of the altar dedicated to Malakbel from the temple of Baalshamin in Palmyra.